THE WRESTLER

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IT'S CRUSH OR BE CRUSHED FOR RANDY SAVAGE

April 1994

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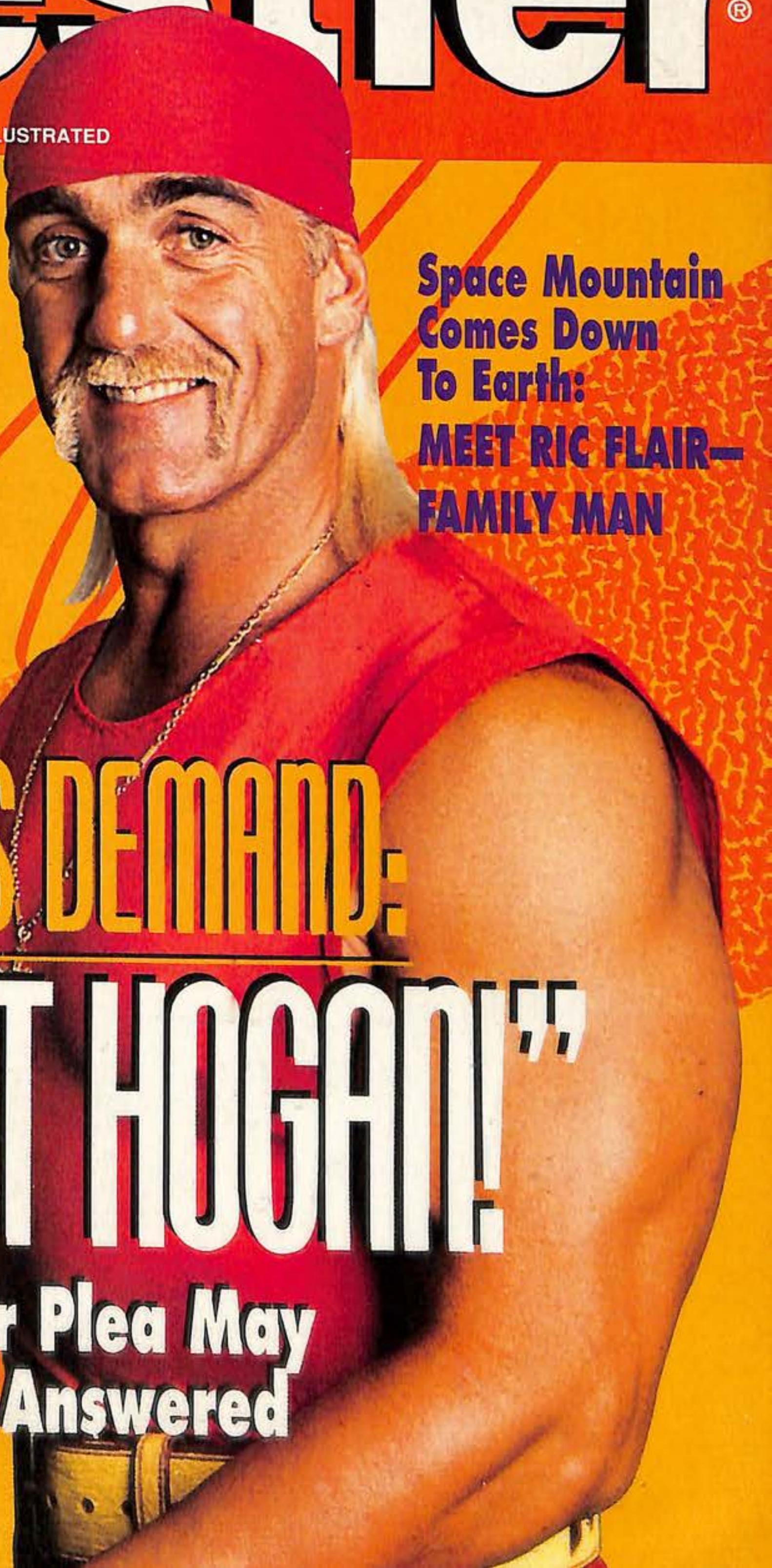

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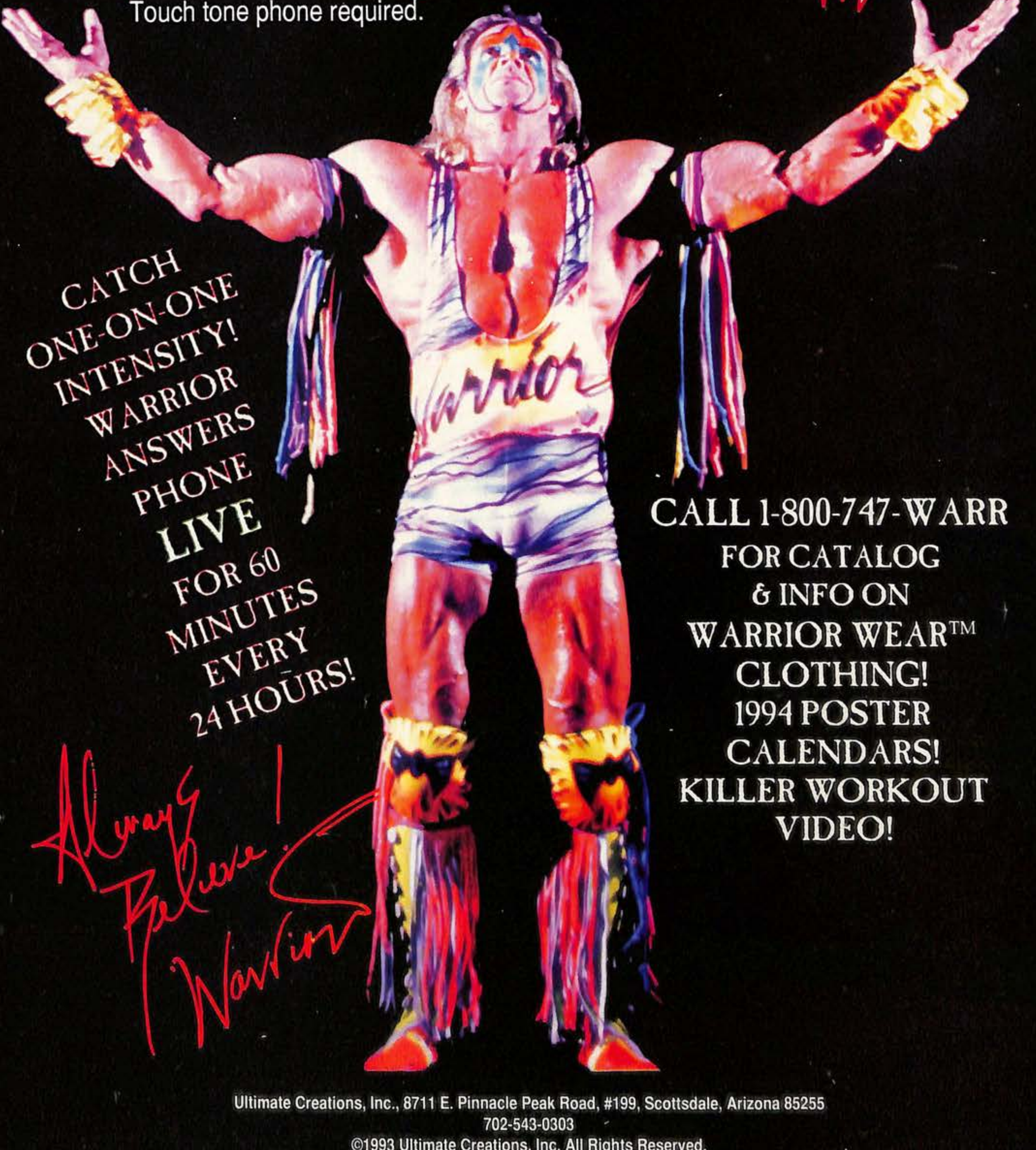

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THE Wrestler

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YOUR LETTERS

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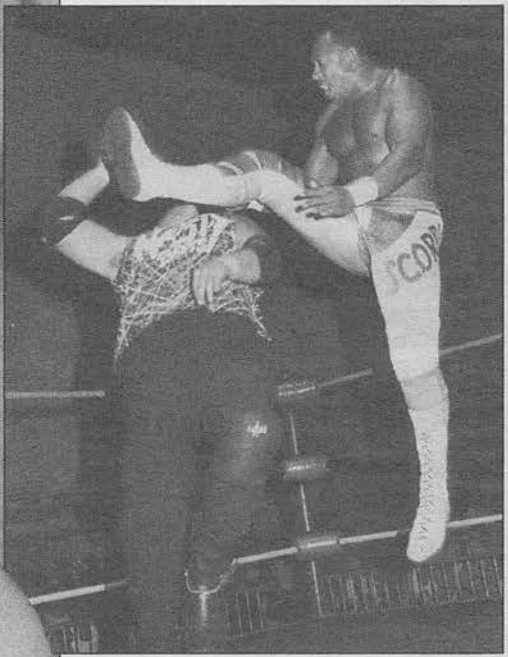
Tammy Fytch isn't very popular with reader Mike Reich. He says the Hillary Clinton wannabe shouldn't try to get involved with wrestling, something he believes will always be run by men.



Even some fans of The Nasty Boys like 2 Cold Scorpio and Marcus Alexander Bagwell. One is reader Jenny Bryant, who says Scorpio and Bagwell would be her favorite WCW tag team if the Nastys hadn't rejoined the federation.

JARRETT? CAN'T BEAR IT

I don't know why the WWF is wasting air time on Jeff Jarrett. He is always bragging about his ability to wrestle and his singing talent. If he is such a great country singer, how come he is a wrestler?

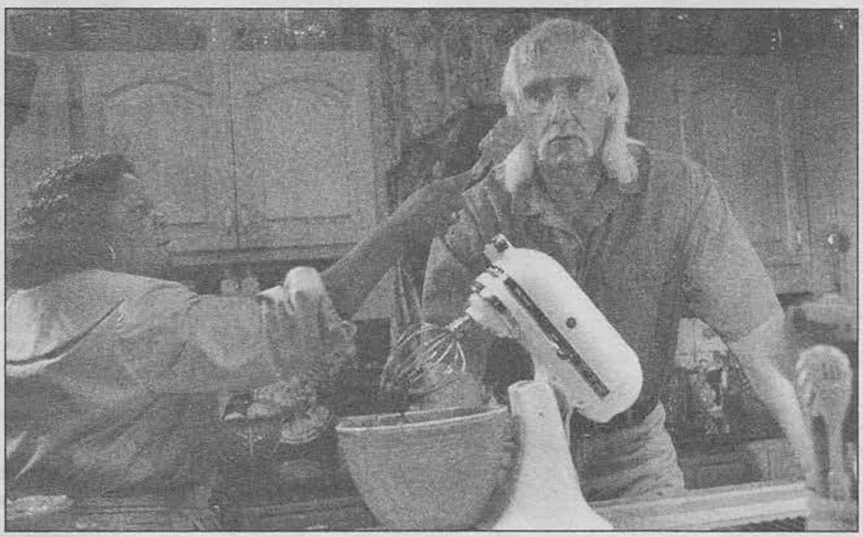
He also states that he can beat the likes of Bret Hart, Curt Hennig, and The Undertaker. Prove it, pal!

In the glory days of wrestling, during the era of Bruno Sammartino, Killer Kowalski, Lou Thesz, and The Sheik, Jarrett would probably be relegated to the undercard. Enough with the talking, Jeff. Let's see some action!

AARON CUSHMAN
Taunton, MA

A HITCH TO FYTCH

Who the hell does Tammy Fytch think she is? She thinks she can make a wrestler a champion just because she is a woman. What a bunch of crap! She is just another bored, avowed, angry



Hulk Hogan may not have exhibited much acting skill in *Mr. Nanny*. But reader Nathan Henrich says the "Hulkster," given time, could do well in Hollywood.

feminazi who tries to take over something that has always been and always will be run by men.

I hope some wrestler beats the living daylights out of her. It would show her how tough this sport actually is.

Oh, by the way, how is Hillary's health care plan going, huh? Smoky Mountain isn't afraid of you, Tammy. It's just that your ideas would be just as good as Bill Clinton's.

MIKE REICH
Poolesville, MD

THREE OF A KIND

I think the three sickest characters in wrestling are Jerry Lawler, Jim Cornette, and Bobby "The Weasel" Heenan. I wouldn't be surprised to hear they were sending "get well" cards to each other.

ART BACKSTROM
Midlothian, IL

SOPRANO CORNETTE?

Doesn't this magazine ever get tired of printing all of Jim Cornette's lies? What about his ugly face, too? I'm referring to the pack of lies in the January 1994

This picture of Smoky Mountain mastermind Jim Cornette may disappoint reader Shirley W. Mays. She can't stand to look at him, and says she's tired of his constant lies.

edition of THE WRESTLER ("Impeached, But Still Impossible: Jim Cornette Reveals 'Why I Resigned As Smoky Mountain Commissioner'").

Everyone knows that Cornette is a lying low life that needs the hell beaten out of him. It's a damn crying shame that Armstrong's Army didn't have any more chances to do just that.

If it had been me, I would have kicked Jimbo so hard that the only creatures on this earth who could hear him talk would be dogs. Listen, I'm talking beyond the soprano stage!

SHIRLEY W. MAYS
Amherst, VA

HOLLYWOOD HULK

I'm a wrestling and movie fan who's 79 years old, and I agree with David Rosenbaum that Hulk Hogan isn't much of an actor ("No Holds Barred," January 1994). But I don't think the "Hulkster" is entirely at fault. He was given leading roles at all too young an age. Acting is a complex art, and it takes time.

Some of your older readers may recall a great wrestler-turned-character actor named Nat Pendleton, who played supporting roles with the likes of Carole Lombard and the late Myrna Loy. The studios knew well enough to let him progress at his own pace, and he became one of Hollywood's most reliable comic supporting players, usually as a mobster or other tough guy.

With the demise of the studio system, actors are left on their own, and for athletes and other non-actors, the results can be disastrous. So it is with Hogan. The poor fellow never got a chance to learn his craft, but they expected him to carry his own vehicles. I'm waiting to see if he might fare better in television,

(Continued on page 50)

WHAT'S HAPPENING

By Bill Apter

THE "NATURE BOY" is "The Man" again. I'm happy to report that **Ric Flair** won't be retiring any time soon. He withstood a beating from **Big Van Vader** at Starrcade before rallying to win the WCW World title. **Harley Race** did his best to interfere, but the fact remains: Flair pinned Vader cleanly.

WCW showed Flair with wife **Beth** and their children both before and after the card. Flair was also congratulated by former rivals **Rick Steamboat** and **Sting** afterward. You can bet the Flair-Vader wars will continue for some time.

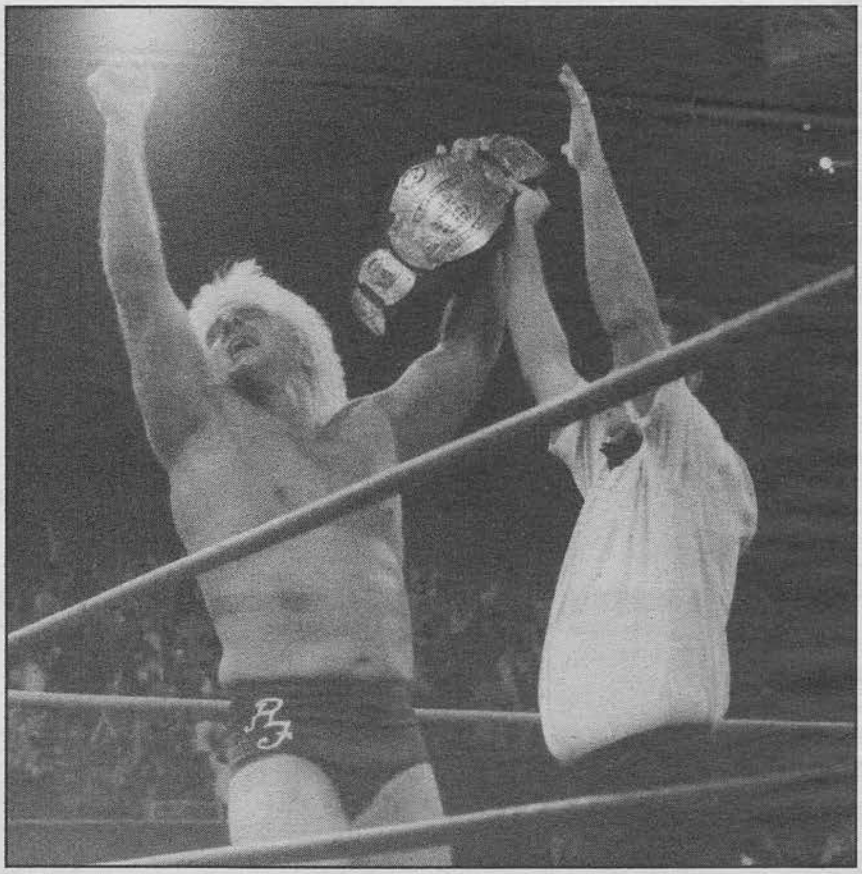
Speaking of Steamboat and Sting, neither was as successful as the "Nature Boy" in Charlotte, North Carolina. Steamboat wrestled **Lord Steven Regal** to a draw for the TV title; Sting and **Road Warrior Hawk** beat World tag team champs **The Nasty Boys**, but only by DQ, as **Missy Hyatt** interfered. Somewhere along the line, her interference is sure to backfire.

Steve Austin won the U.S. title from **Dustin Rhodes** in the most controversial match at Starrcade. In that best-of-three-falls bout, Rhodes was disqualified for tossing Austin over the top rope in the first fall, then was pinned while "Stunning" Steve held his tights in the second. WCW officials offered no explanation as to why they allowed the title to change hands when a DQ was involved.

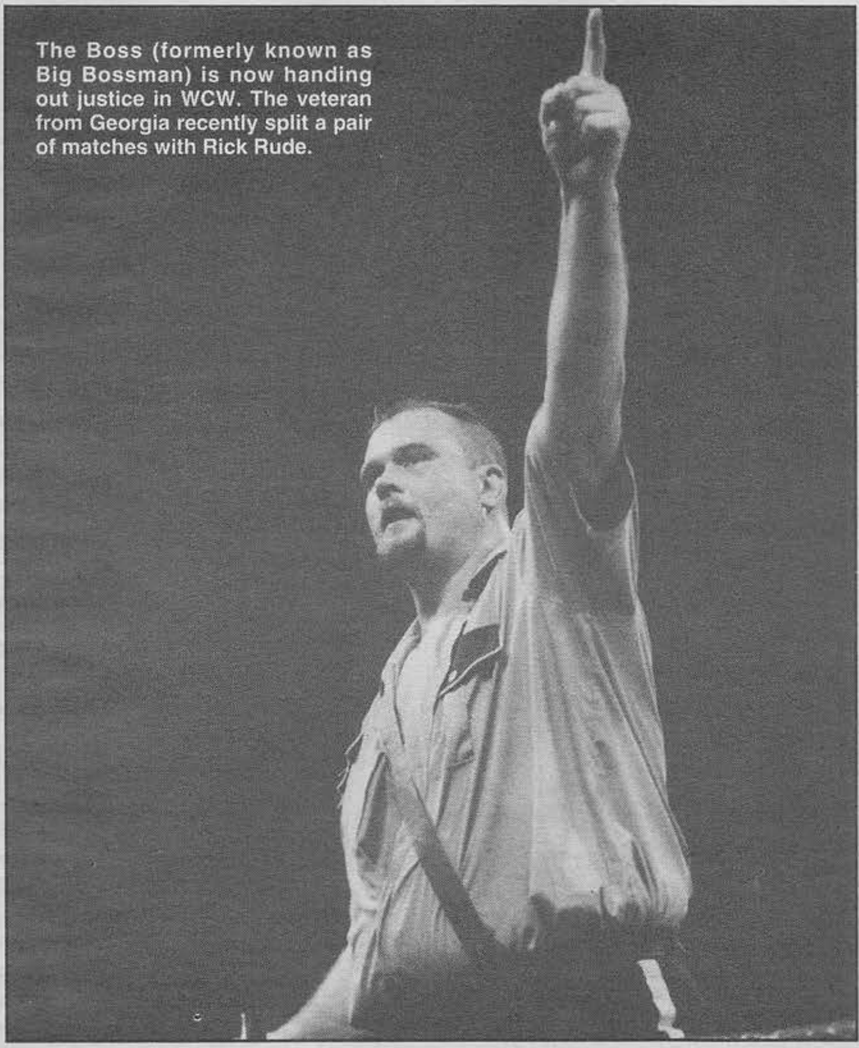
"I don't get it," said Rhodes. "He won both falls under questionable circumstances. I'm frustrated right now. I should still be champion."

"Tell him to go crying to his daddy about it," said Austin. "He has to learn to start taking losses like a man."

Big Bossman has surfaced in WCW. He pinned **Rick Rude** in an impromptu match a week before Starrcade, but was pinned himself by the "Ravishing One" when he



Ric Flair exults in victory, and why shouldn't he? The "Nature Boy" surprised Big Van Vader at Starrcade in Charlotte, North Carolina, for the WCW World title. If Flair had lost, he would have been forced to retire.



The Boss (formerly known as Big Bossman) is now handing out justice in WCW. The veteran from Georgia recently split a pair of matches with Rick Rude.

He's already beaten rival **Irwin R. Schyster** in several of those.

For now, **Bret** and **Owen Hart** have settled their differences. They've been in each other's corner for several TV matches and have wrestled together in a tag team. Owen still says he'd like to face his brother one on one. We'll see.

The **Randy Savage-Crush** feud has hit full stride. Give Savage credit for going back into the ring full-time. He agreed to take on the Honolulu native in a number of falls-count-anywhere matches.

Unfortunately, Crush has gotten the upper hand in the feud's early stages. He's had help from some of the WWF's "Foreign Fanatics," **Yokozuna** and **Ludvig Borga**. In one match, however, **Lex Luger** came to the "Macho Man's" rescue.

Jeff Jarrett is finally doing more than bragging he's a great country singer. He's actually competing in the WWF. He's done well

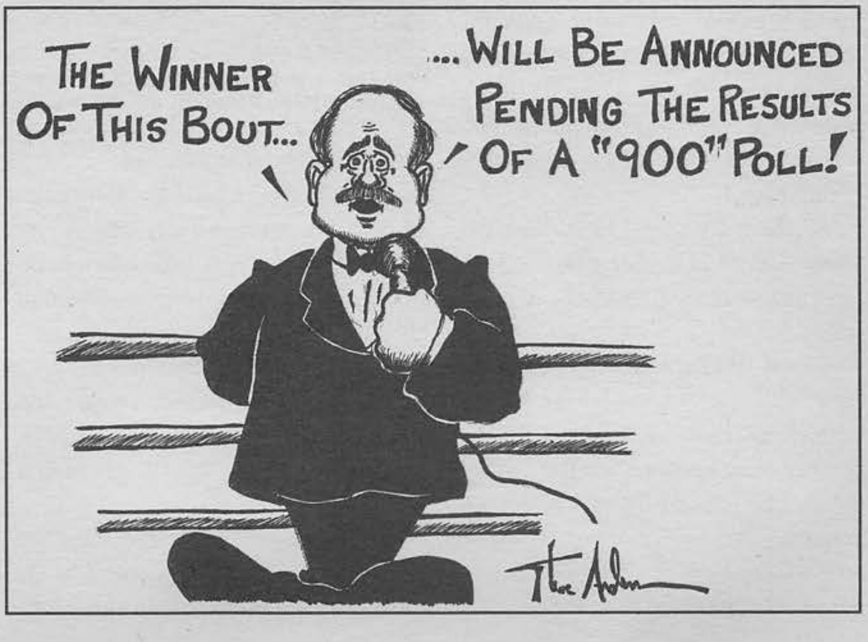
(Continued on page 52)

took **Davey Boy Smith's** place at the pay-per-view.

Cactus Jack and **Maxx Payne** have quietly become a formidable force on the WCW tag team scene. They beat **Tex Slazenger** and **Shanghai Pierce** in Charlotte and are said to be harboring championship dreams. Wouldn't you like to be in on their strategy sessions?

In the WWF, Intercontinental champ **Razor Ramon** is facing plenty of challenges. He's signed to face former champ **Shawn Michaels** in a series of ladder matches, where the I-C belt is supended above the ring and the only way to win is to bring a ladder into the ring, climb it, and claim the prize.

STEVE ANDERSON'S VIEW



NO HOLDS BARRED

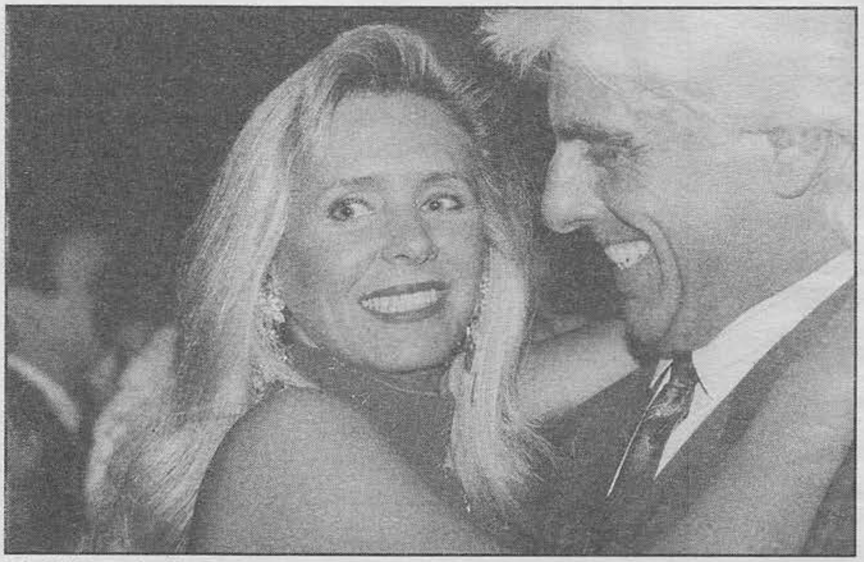
with David Rosenbaum

THIS IS THE column that Bill Apter knew was coming and tried to head off at the pass. Nice try, Bill, but it's time for you to stop protecting your buddy Ric Flair.

And while we're speaking of the "Nature Boy" …

When did Ric Flair become Rick Steamboat?

Bill knew this column was coming because I was the first person he spoke to after Starrcade '93 and I asked him that very same question. Bill offered lame answer after lame answer until I finally screamed, "He's a damn liar!" and hung up the phone.



Ric Flair and wife Beth had a wonderful New Year's celebration, with Ric having beaten Big Van Vader for the WCW World title at Starrcade five days earlier.

I'm not saying Bill's a liar. I'm saying Flair is.

At the very least, he's cheating somebody, and I don't know if it's the fans, his wife and children, or himself.

To tell you the truth, I hope it's the fans.

Anyone who saw Starrcade '93 on pay-per-view knows what I'm talking about. The telecast opened with Flair at home.

Flair at home, you say? Since when did Flair have a home? I thought he had many houses.

Exactly. Many houses. Many ports of call. A woman in every city. A city for every woman. A little black book that's the envy of every wrestler in the free world (and some in the not-so-free world).

All untrue, of course. There is no little black book and no woman in every port of call. But I'll get to that later.

Then we saw Flair hugging his wife, Beth, and saying goodbye to his children. It was a touching scene: Athlete going to battle says farewell to the troops.

Fast forward about three hours. Flair has just beaten Big Van Vader for his 10th world title. Cut back to the dressing room area, where Flair is once again adorned by his wife and children.

Adorned is the perfect word. It means to decorate with ornaments. To enhance.

It is obviously a loving family. Flair talks about how much the fans

(Continued on page 54)

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BLINDSIDED

BY
ANDY
RODRIGUEZ

THE NEWLY CROWNED WWF Women's champion is named Alundra Blayze. She looks just like Madusa Miceli. Sounds like her, too.

Yes, indeed, it is Madusa. What a great athlete she is. Beat the best women in the world to win that title. Left no doubts that she deserved to win. Left a lot of doubts about her character.

In wrestling, name changes are common. They are a part of the game. I thought Madusa was different. She was always the woman of substance. She didn't go along with the rest of the crowd. She was Madusa.

Now along comes Alundra and we are left to wonder how serious she is about being a champion. Of course she will continue to say all the right things. She will tell us how glad she is to compete in a federation where women are treated as competitors, not as window dressing.

Alundra Blayze

If she says that, she will be correct. The WWF is to be commended for including a championship for women on its title roster. All of the women who competed for that belt were worthy competitors deserving of victory. Madusa was among them and she was equally worthy. So why did she have to cast this shadow and change her name?

Eventually, she will provide the answer. She actually may have a very good reason for wanting to be Alundra Blayze. At the moment I can't imagine what that could be, but it may actually be quite a good one.

Again: Will Alundra Blayze be as determined and desirous of victory as Madusa? Probably, yes. There seems to be no diminution of her wrestling skills. She still believes she is the best female wrestler in the world. That Miss Texas garnered a spot in the "*PWI* 500" particularly rankles her.

It still bugs me. It just doesn't feel right that she would change her name.

A couple of days ago I spoke with an old friend of Madusa's who said she had no idea the change was coming. She ascertained that Madusa was doing this just to spice things up a little bit, to let people know she intended to be a big deal in the WWF. The new name didn't bother her at all.

I read the change as Madusa being too willing to succumb to the WWF circus. She is adhering to the same standard as Bastion Booger. But she isn't a sideshow freak. She is a championship athlete. She doesn't need the WWF to make her great; it needs her to make its new title great.

She probably agrees the federation needs her more than she needs it. She probably also would agree the name change was completely unnecessary. She made it, though, and reportedly feels very comfortable with it.

A year from now we may all know and accept her as Alundra Blayze. The name may help drive her to new heights of stardom. Madusa may be forgotten entirely, becoming just another name in an increasingly distant past. All hail Alundra, Queen of Wrestling, the cry might go.

However, if Madusa is forgotten, her accomplishments also may be. There have been tremendous successes in the ring, as a kickboxer as well as a wrestler. Alundra the WWF star won't be remembered for kickboxing.

We may also forget embarrassments like the bikini contest at Beach Blast '92, and that would be a good thing. If we forget that it was Madusa, not Alundra, who stood up to the weasely Paul E. Dangerously, that would be a bad thing.

Good reporting of history won't let us forget what Alundra did as Madusa. All she has done is change her name. Wrestlers do it all the time. She is the same woman. That's what I'm telling myself—she's the same woman. Here's what else I'm telling myself: She changes her name back to Madusa. Then it will all make sense again. □

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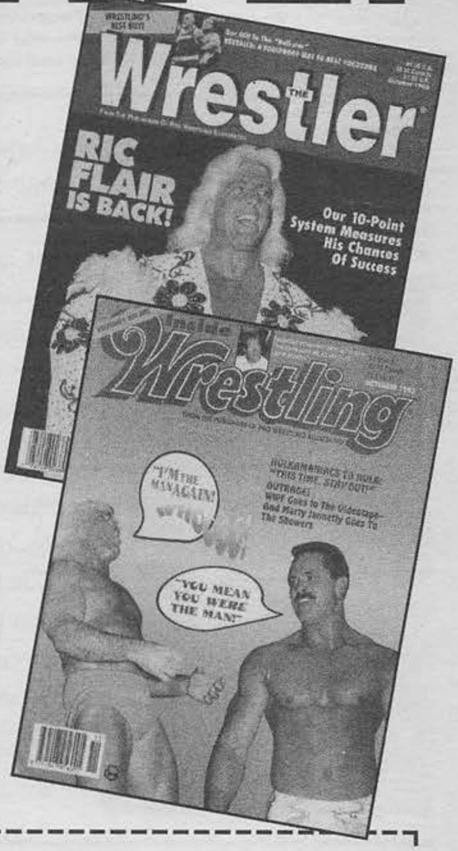

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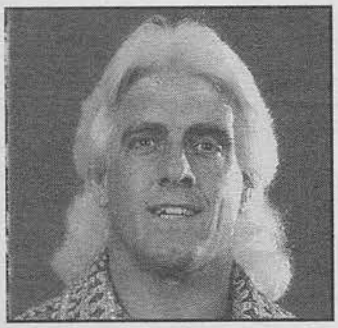
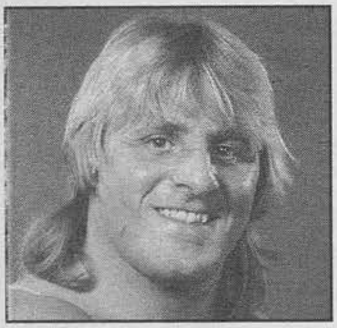
Thumbs Up

Each Issue, *The Wrestler* will praise the noteworthy and damn those who violate the honor of wrestling. The praiseworthy receive a Thumbs Up, the disgraceful are marked with a Thumbs Down. Here is this month's roll of honor and shame.

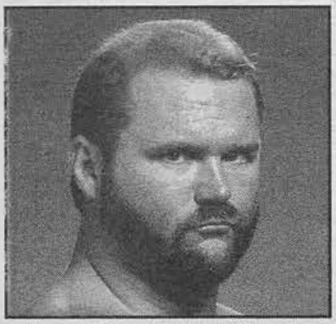


Thumbs Up to Ric Flair. The "Nature Boy" gets our highest commendation for winning his 10th world title, at Starrcade '93. He beat a great champion in Big Van Vader and overcame Harley Race's interference. Flair looked beaten several times, but rallied to wear down Vader's leg and get the pin. The fans at Independence Arena in Charlotte, North Carolina, will never forget this match. Nor will they forget the look of gratitude Flair wore when he stumbled from the ring and into the waiting arms of his wife, Beth. Rick Steamboat and Sting offered testimonials. What a performance by this marvelous athlete.



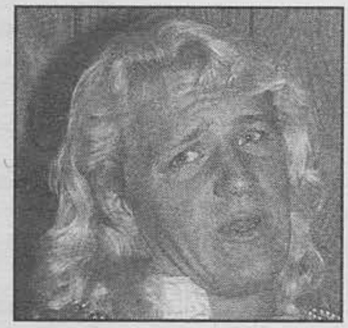
Thumbs Up to Owen Hart. Thankfully, it looks like the hard feelings between "The Rocket" and older brother Bret have been smoothed over. We hope it stays that way. This family is too tight to let petty jealousies tear it apart. Kudos to Stu and Helen Hart for bringing up children who know the meaning of family values. Incidentally, Owen has turned in some fine efforts recently. Maybe he learned the best way to get respect is to earn it. He scored resounding victories over Bastion Booger and Adam Bomb and is ready to march up the WWF ladder.

Thumbs Up to Jerry Lawler. Although his personal legal problems drag on, "The King" has managed to keep his professional life separate. Lawler is a multi-USWA heavyweight champion, and his most impressive victory ever came on December 20 in Memphis. Lawler beat former friend Jeff Jarrett for the title, sending out a signal to everyone that the "The King" is alive and well. Most athletes would have collapsed under the enormous emotional strain of such legal entanglements. This just proves Lawler's ability to remain focused and not let the problems affect his wrestling.



Thumbs Up to Arn Anderson. Double-A has returned to the ring for the first time since his incident in England with Sid Vicious; one of his wins was a pin of Paul Roma. Many worried Anderson would never return after the dangerous, frightening encounter with Vicious, who is still on the sidelines. But Anderson, one of the bravest men in wrestling, had a score to settle with Roma, his one-time tag team partner in The Four Horsemen. There's a reason Anderson is respectfully called "The Enforcer." It's a nickname for a man who never backs down to anyone or anything.

Thumbs Down



Thumbs Down to Jeff Jarrett. The former USWA star and fan favorite is now a country music-singing rulebreaker in the WWF. What went wrong, "Double J"? It's sad to see this happen to one of the world's finest scientific wrestlers, who comes from a distinguished mat family. So why is he claiming to have one of the greatest singing voices in country music? Why is he belittling WWF fans and wrestlers? Didn't we have enough singing in the ring when Honky Tonk Man competed in the WWF? Rock 'n' wrestling notwithstanding, music and wrestling just don't mix. Got it, Jeff?

Thumbs Down to Brian Pillman. We'll admit that we laughed profusely the first time we saw Pillman in a chicken outfit—his own personal insult at Col. Robert Parker, white-suited manager of teammate-turned-rival Steve Austin. But Pillman is carrying the joke too far. He and Dustin Rhodes recently stormed into a WCW TV taping carrying the chicken head, mocking Col. Sanders—er, Parker. Sorry, "Flyin' Brian," but in our eyes, you're beginning to look like a turkey. If you're that hungry for chicken, take a one-way trip to Lake Edna.

Thumbs Down to the loony Luna Vachon. She's toying with the emotions of both Bastion Booger and Bam Bam Bigelow, and that's beneath even her. True, this romantic triangle of WWF grotesques will never make the public forget Ivana, Marla, and The Donald, but Vachon seemed to have a good thing going with Bigelow (at least by their perverse standards). Why did she suddenly attempt to seduce the repulsive, gross Booger, only to set him up for an attack by the "Beast From The East"? Did Luna find it necessary to make her man feel jealous? She's crazed, all right. And extremely dangerous.

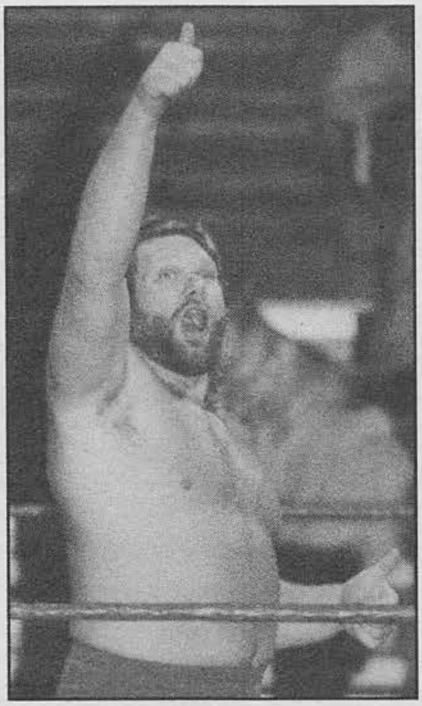
Thumbs Down to Lord Steven Regal. The WCW TV champion doesn't have any guts. He says he's of royal heritage, but there's nothing regal about his actions. Regal refuses to put his title on the line in an anything-goes, no time-limit match. Why? He didn't win it under these limited stipulations. And how come WCW lets him get away with it? We're certain Rick Steamboat and Dustin Rhodes would hammer Regal in matches longer than 10 or 15 minutes. A few days after Starrcade '93, WCW World champion Ric Flair easily pinned Regal. All talk and no action doesn't cut it on this side of the pond, chap.

CORRESPONDENTS
REPORTS

Colonia, NJ ***(Correspondent—Bryan Shannon):*** All-American favorite Hacksaw Jim Duggan looks forward to matches against Kamala, but he was unprepared when the Ugandan Giant jumped him before the bell rang. Duggan tried hard to mount a comeback—Kamala wouldn't let him. He caught Duggan in a painful bearhug, and it wasn't until the enthusiastic crowd began chanting "U.S.A. ... U.S.A!" that the patriot from Glens Falls, New York, escaped.

Within a few minutes, Duggan had all the momentum working in his favor and he turned the tide on Kamala. He knocked him off his feet with his trademark clothesline tackle and pinned Kamala. After the match, Duggan victoriously saluted his fans.

In other bouts: UWA junior heavyweight champion The Cheetah Kid defeated King Kaluha ... Tommy Cairo and Johnny Rotten fought to a double-countout after brawling with chairs ... Captain Jack beat The Monster Mat Man ... UWA heavyweight champion Honky Tonk Man defeated Skull Von Krus.



Thumbs up to Hacksaw Duggan! The upstate New York patriot relied on the fans' enthusiasm to help carry him through against Kamala in a meeting of two former WWF stars.

Canton, OH ***(Correspondent—Jeff Gorman):*** Razor Ramon and Irwin R. Schyster have had their differences of late, so both were thrilled to get the chance to settle them in a ladder match for Ramon's Intercontinental title. The only way to win such a bout is to bring a ladder into the ring, climb to the top, and grab the I-C belt suspended above the ring.

Schyster gained an early advantage by kicking and elbowing Ramon's left leg. After applying a figure-four leglock, Schyster went for the ladder. Ramon recovered and slugged him. In the next few minutes, both men tried climbing the ladder, only to be thwarted. At one point, the "Bad Guy" even pulled IRS off by his necktie.

When Ramon again ascended the ladder, Schyster came off the ropes and shoulderblocked him, sending the ladder crashing to the arena floor.

The match came to a conclusion after Schyster tried to smash Razor with his metal briefcase. Ramon instead grabbed it and clobbered the taxman. Eventually, both got to the top of the ladder and slugged it out. Ramon's right hand proved stronger; Schyster fell to the mat and Ramon grabbed the I-C belt.

In other bouts: Men on a Mission beat The Red Knight & The Black Knight ... Jeff Jarrett pinned The Kid with his own feet on the ropes ... Bob Backlund pinned Mike Sharpe ... Marty Jannetty beat Steve Lombardi ... Tatanka pinned Adam Bomb ...

(Continued on page 56)

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Hulk Hogan hails from which California beach community?
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3) Venice Beach
4) Newport Beach

At what University did Ron Simmons play football?
1) Notre Dame
2) Florida State University
3) Michigan State University
4) Oglethorpe University

True or False: Giant Gonzales competed in the 1984 Olympics as a member of Argentina's water polo team
1) True
2) False

The Undertaker was once tag team partners with...
1) Lou Albano
2) Sergeant Slaughter
3) Rick Steiner
4) None of the above

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1937-12-93

You Asked Us

Here's the monthly feature that YOU get to write! It's your chance to have a top wrestler answer YOUR questions! Only the best questions will be answered, so put on your thinking caps and come up with some good ones! Address your questions—and who you would like to have answer them—to:

YOU ASKED US, c/o THE WRESTLER,
Box 956, Ft. Washington, PA 19034.

Q: "This question is for Tammy Fytch: Now that you dominate Smoky Mountain, I would like to see you go to WCW and take Missy Hyatt down a notch or two. Any plans?"—Rick Marshall, Grethel, KY

A: **"Thanks for acknowledging my talent. Not many men do," Fytch replied. "I honestly don't think much about Missy Hyatt, basically because I don't think much *of* Missy Hyatt. It's mindless types like her who hurt the cause of women in wrestling. Also, keep in mind Missy manages a tag team and I manage a single wrestler, the great Brian Lee. If we in Smoky had a talent agreement with WCW, like we do with the WWF, and if either I signed up a tag team or Missy found a solo wrestler, I'd love to humiliate her. It would be so easy! But for now, Rick, such talk is strictly hypothetical."**

***

Q: "This question is for Contributing Editor Liz Hunter: What do you think about Jeff Jarrett, and I'd like to know what his idea of a romantic evening is like?"—Susan Senkel, Duncanville, TX

A: **"Susan, I think Jeff Jarrett is a splendid wrestler, pound-for-pound one of the best in North America," Hunter said. "He was that way in the USWA, and he'll have his share of glory in the WWF, whether the fans like him or not. As far as a romantic evening is concerned, that's all changed with his new 'Double J' persona. Friends say he used to visit some of the most ritzy clubs in Memphis. Now, he's more interested in traveling along Interstate 40 in a pickup truck between Memphis and Nashville, all the while listening to Reba McEntire and Randy Travis cassettes. I spend a lot of time in Tennessee and love the people there, but to me, country music is like Mexican food—best enjoyed in small doses."**

***

Q: "This question is for Ric Flair: I'm sure your favorite place to wrestle is Charlotte, since that's your current home. What's your second-favorite venue?"—Maurice Hill, Van Wert, OH

A: **"Charlotte's definitely my favorite, especially since I just regained the World title there," Flair said. "Number two, I guess, would be a tossup between the Twin Cities in Minnesota, since that's where I was born and raised, and Atlanta, the base of WCW. But I've been fortunate enough to wrestle all over the world, and there are plenty of passionate fans everywhere. And when you're in an intense match—and most of mine are—you don't have time to think about where you're wrestling."**

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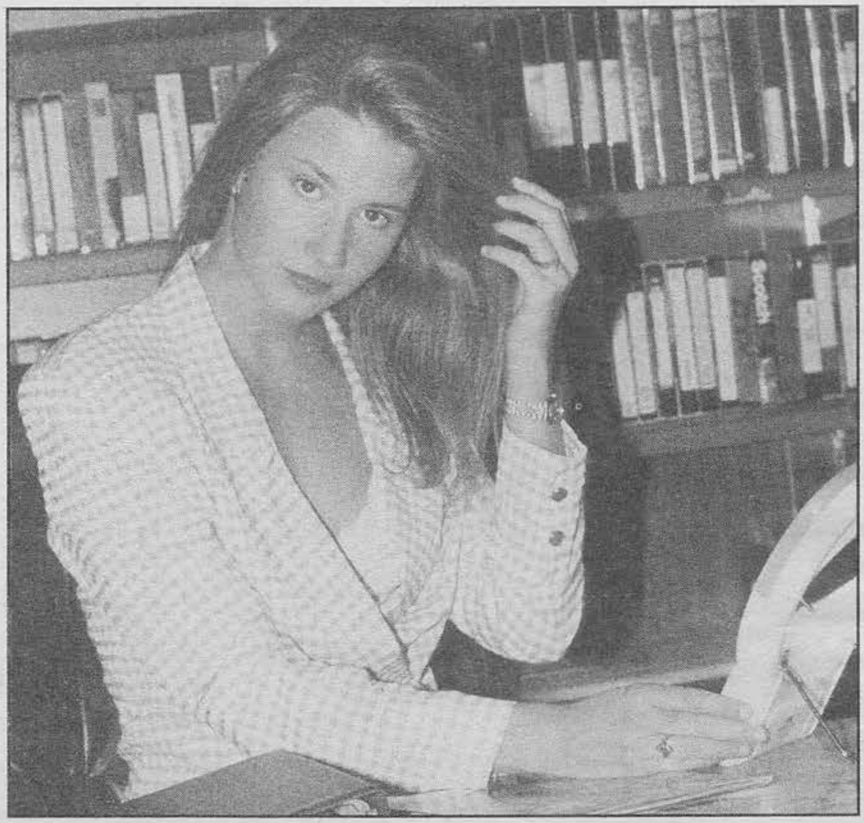
(Continued on page 58)



Tammy Fytch admits she's no fan of Missy Hyatt. However, Fytch says it would be impractical now for her to humiliate Hyatt.

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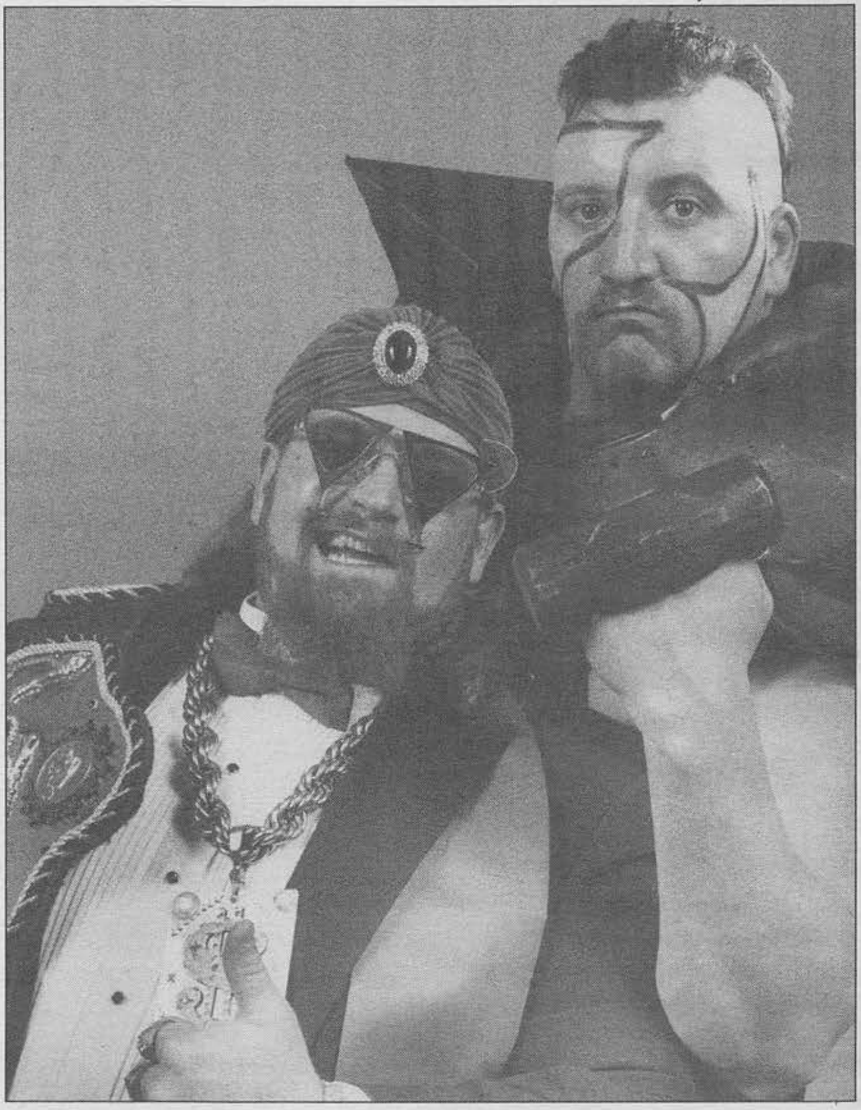
INTRODUCING
JACK HAMMER

By V.J. Paterno

Photo by Jason Ross Lavin



Jack Hammer was discovered by Diamond Mike in California, and both are starting to make their mark on the independent scene. Hammer has won titles in the suburban Philadelphia-based WWWA.

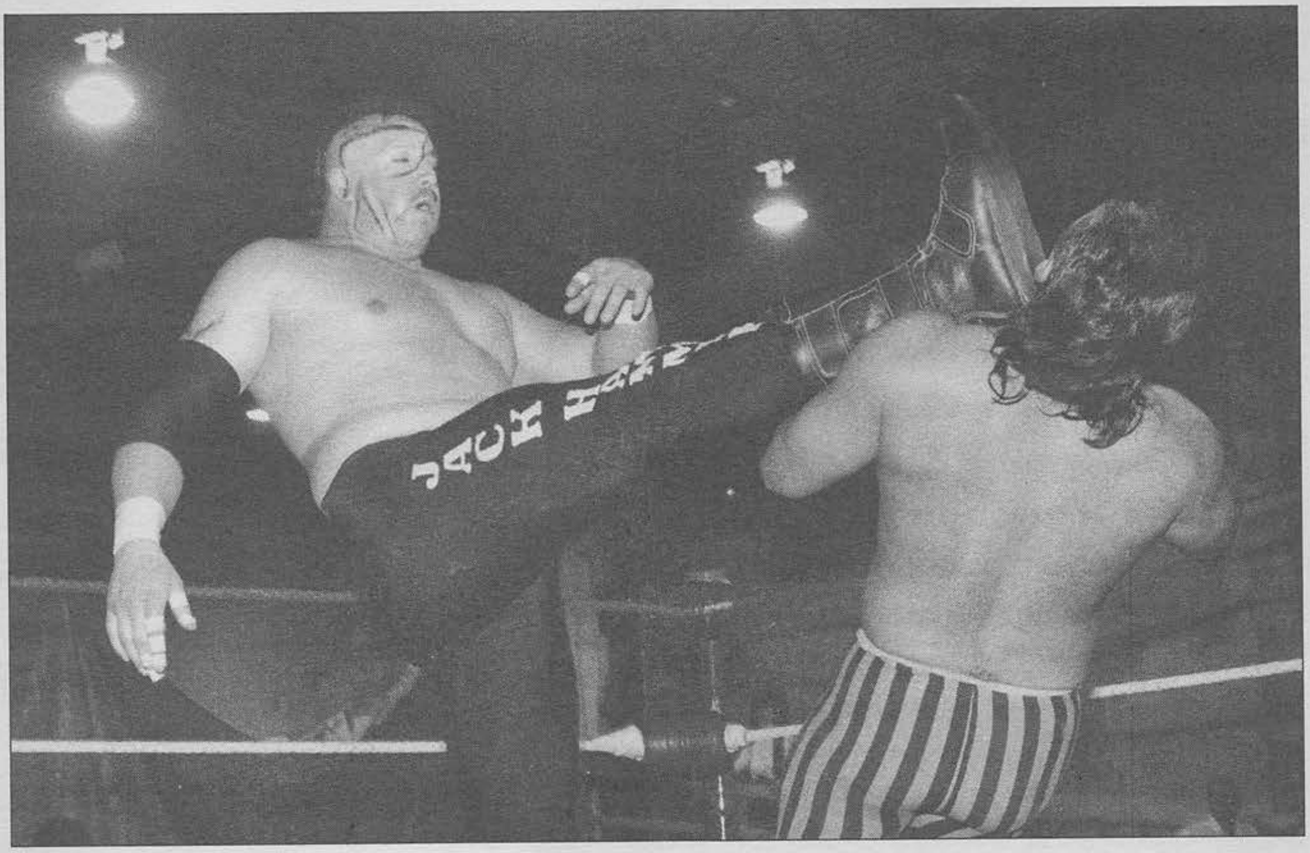
THERE HE WAS, just walking along Muscle Beach in Southern California. How was Jack Hammer to know this simple stroll would lead to a professional wrestling career?

But as fate would have it, that day he would meet Diamond Mike, a budding manager who could see this 6'6", 325-pound youngster from Detroit had star potential written all over him. They hit it off, and Mike soon sent Jack to be trained by none other than The Wild Samoans.

"They're tough, very tough, probably the best trainers in the business," Hammer said. "I learned so much from them."

Shortly thereafter, he made his pro debut in Allentown, Pennsylvania, defeating Playboy Derek. In less than three years, Hammer has won the heavyweight and Intercontinental titles in the WWWA, a federation based in suburban Philadelphia. He has also competed in the Caribbean-based WWC ("The competition was real good. I liked the warm weather and everything"), and regularly wrestles in several New Jersey independent promotions. Now he believes he's ready for the big time.

He comes down on an opponent with brute force, driving him into submission! This muscular youngster is ready to nail down his niche in the Mid-Atlantic region



At 6'6" and 325 pounds, Hammer certainly has the size to give opposing wrestlers headaches. But Jason Knight discovers that Jack can achieve similar results with his feet.

"In three years, I've come along much further than I thought I would," he said. "Now my goal is getting into the WWF or WCW. All I need is the opportunity and I'll make a huge impact on this sport."

Hammer has challenged his share of name opponents. He defeated Nailz for the WWWA heavyweight championship, and conquered Tony Atlas for the federation's I-C belt.

"That's probably my biggest victory to date," Hammer noted. "The biggest match I've ever had was about a year ago, against Davey Boy Smith, when he was in between stints in the WWF and WCW. Even though he beat me, it was only by disqualification."

The matches may not have been all that significant for his veteran opponents. For Hammer, whose favorite maneuver is a throat slam off the top rope, they helped define his growth relative to the elite of the squared circle.

"It's just a whole different caliber of wrestling," he said. "The competition is altogether different."

Hammer excelled in both football and wrestling in high school, and competed in several tournaments against collegiate-level wrestlers. But that didn't appeal very much to him, and the thought of professional wrestling entered his mind. Enter Diamond Mike.

Hammer now resides in central New Jersey, not very far from WWF contender Bam Bam Bigelow and current part-time competitor King Kong Bundy. He'd love to reach similar renown in several years. And Mike believes that will eventually happen.

"He's been a delight to manage," Diamond Mike said. "He regularly asks questions of me, not to challenge my authority, but to legitimately ask why this has to be done. I'll be surprised if he doesn't gain some national impact somewhere down the line. Other managers have said they envy me, and would love to take over Jack. Sorry guys, he's not available. I plan to take him to the top."

His wrestler returns the compliment. "Mike does it all for me. He takes care of all my bookings and business dealings, and in the ring he's always there with advice. He's a valued partner."

During a phone interview, Hammer's African gray parrot could frequently be heard in the background. But Jack doesn't plan to follow Koko B. Ware's example and have the bird accompany him into the ring.

"He just knows all the curse words," he quipped. Words Hammer's opponents probably mutter after matches. □

Q&A

Each month, *The Wrestler* will present a "Question and Answer" forum with an important figure in the wrestling world. It is your chance to meet wrestling's biggest stars as they answer the questions uppermost in fans' minds

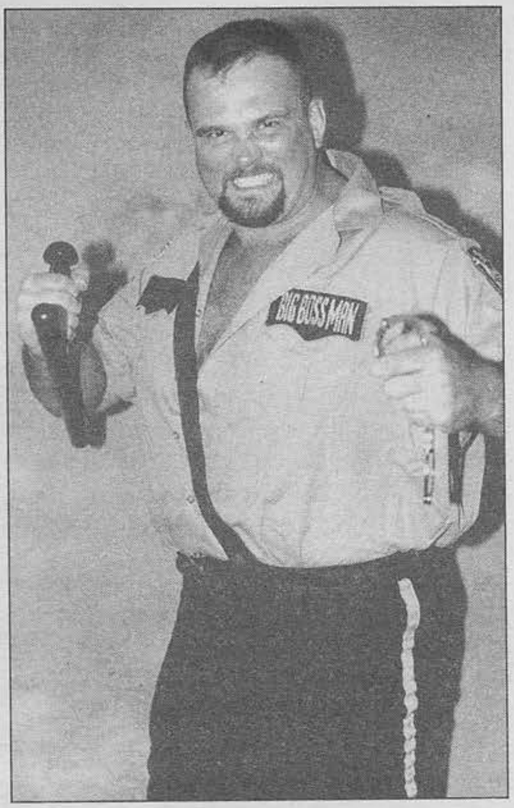
Above: Rude and Boss aren't strangers to each other. They frequently met while both were in the WWF, as in this cage match at Auburn Hills, Michigan, in the spring of 1990. Opposite page: The Boss attacked Rude, who was badmouthing no-show Davey Boy Smith at a recent WCW card.

Q: Boss, there weren't a lot of folks who expected you to show up in WCW. But it isn't exactly unfamiliar territory.

A: That's right. Sure, some faces have changed, but I know this part of the country very well. A few years away doesn't change things that much. I knew that if I came here, I'd be competing against the very best. That's all I demand of myself, that I test myself against only the best. I've been doing it for years and I wanted to continue doing it.

Q: You picked a good example of the best in "Ravishing" Rick Rude.

A: Yes, yes I did. Well, you know the story. I was there at the WCW TV show, not even expecting to wrestle, and there's Rick Rude badmouthing Davey Boy Smith for not showing up for the match. The man wasn't there to defend himself and Rude was lacing into him like nobody's business. It was typical gutless Rude and, man, I just lost it. I couldn't just stand there and let him run his mouth like that. Maybe I had no official "right" to hit the ring



THE BOSS

THE BOSS IS familiar, much more familiar, by another name: Big Bossman. But for now he is The Boss, and it's known quite well by those who have had to deal with him since he began competing in WCW.

Call him what you like; The Boss is one of the most well-respected wrestlers around. Even when he was merely a bodyguard for Jim Cornette at the start of his career, The Boss (then Bubba Rogers) had the confidence that every man who ever faced Cornette kept as close an eye on him as they did on Cornette's wrestlers. Maybe closer.

Given the chance to prove himself in the ring, The Boss wasted little time, quickly capturing the now-defunct UWF championship. Most fans despised him when he entered the WWF as Big Bossman, but when he changed his ways and began an honest law-and-order campaign, he became one of the federation's most beloved competitors.

Now The Boss is in WCW and says he has much to prove. He says there are a lot of people in WCW who could use a dose of his brand of law and order. After WCW's Starrcade, The Boss sat down with Senior Writer Andy Rodriguez. Expectedly, Boss wasn't afraid to name names.

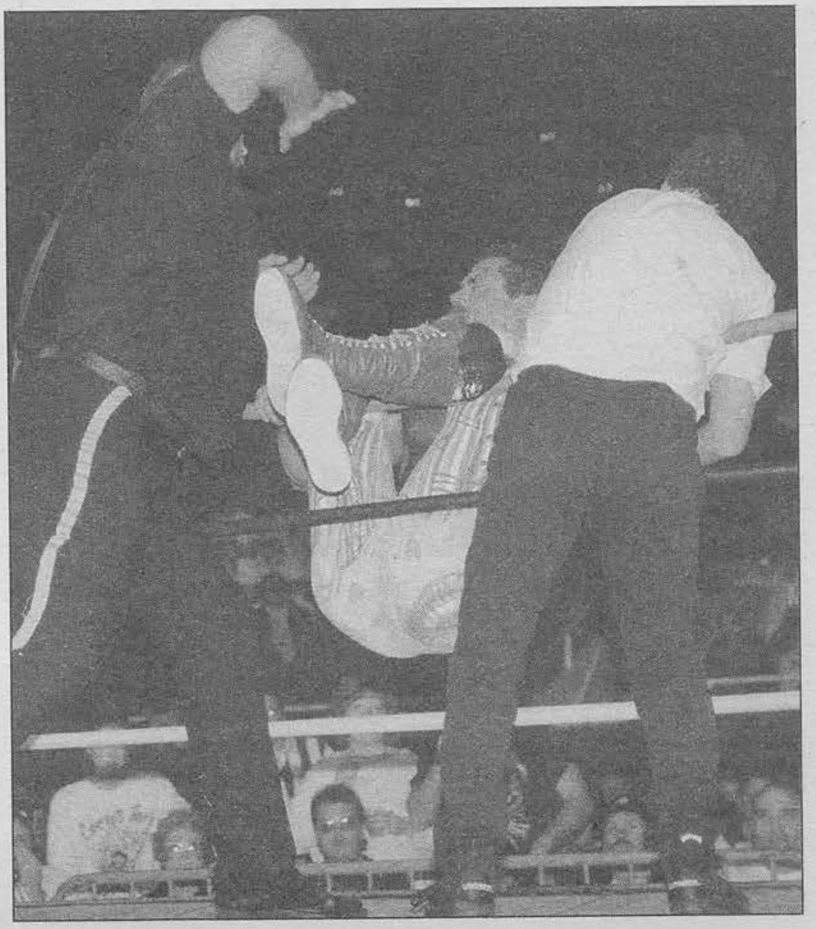
and start beating on him like that, but it sure felt right to do it. It was justice, that's what it was. Rude deserved it, and I'd do it again if I had the chance. To top it all off, I pinned him! Not a bad debut.

Q: Not at all. Sounds like Big Bossman's law-and-order campaign all over again, with Rude as your first target.

A: You got that right. I've never seen a guy so arrogant, so in love with himself. It makes you sick. Listen, I respect the man as a wrestler. He's won enough titles in enough places to be called one of the best. But that won't stop me from laying the hurt on him when the situation warrants, and with Rude, it seems to warrant a heckuva lot.

Q: Rude now is saying you've made the mistake of your career.

A: I'd consider that a threat, if I felt threatened. Rude can bring it on down to the ring anytime he likes. Title or no title on the line, I promise him a battle he'll regret ever starting. Then, hopefully, one of these days,



we won't have to watch him shake his hips and make a fool of himself. Well, maybe it's not so bad him making a fool of himself, but those tights of his? Lock 'em up in a trunk and toss 'em in the Mississippi.

Q: Okay, say you get rid of Rude. Who's your next target?

A: I could give you a lot of names. For starters, how about Harley Race's boys, Big Van Vader and those Colossal Kongs? But, you know, there's one situation here that really bothers me. There is one guy who I definitely would not mind facing in that ring, and that's Paul Roma.

Q: Paul Roma?

A: Why're you so surprised? Look at what that guy did. The Four Horsemen helped him out big time. He wasn't making out too well on his own and they gave him the chance to be a part of something big. It was really working out for him. He was part of the World tag team champions for a while. Then he turns his back on the Horsemen and starts tagging up with a no-good like Paul Orndorff. Seems to me Roma needs to be taught to respect his elders.

Q: Is it any of your business?

A: I understand what you mean by that. You're wondering why I'm sticking my nose in where it doesn't belong. All I'm saying is that if the opportunity ever came down where I had the chance to do the Horsemen a favor, I'd be glad to oblige. I just plain didn't like what Roma did.

Q: You're not bothered by the Horsemen's past?

A: Heck, no. Hey, I've had some pretty shady dealings in my time, too. But I saw what I'd been doing wrong and did something about it. So did the Horsemen, especially Ric Flair. Did you see how moved that man was after he won the World title? I don't care how tough you think you are; that moment got to everybody's emotions. He proved what a true man is.

Q: Flair regaining the title brings us back to the man from whom he won it: Vader. Any special reason for not liking him?

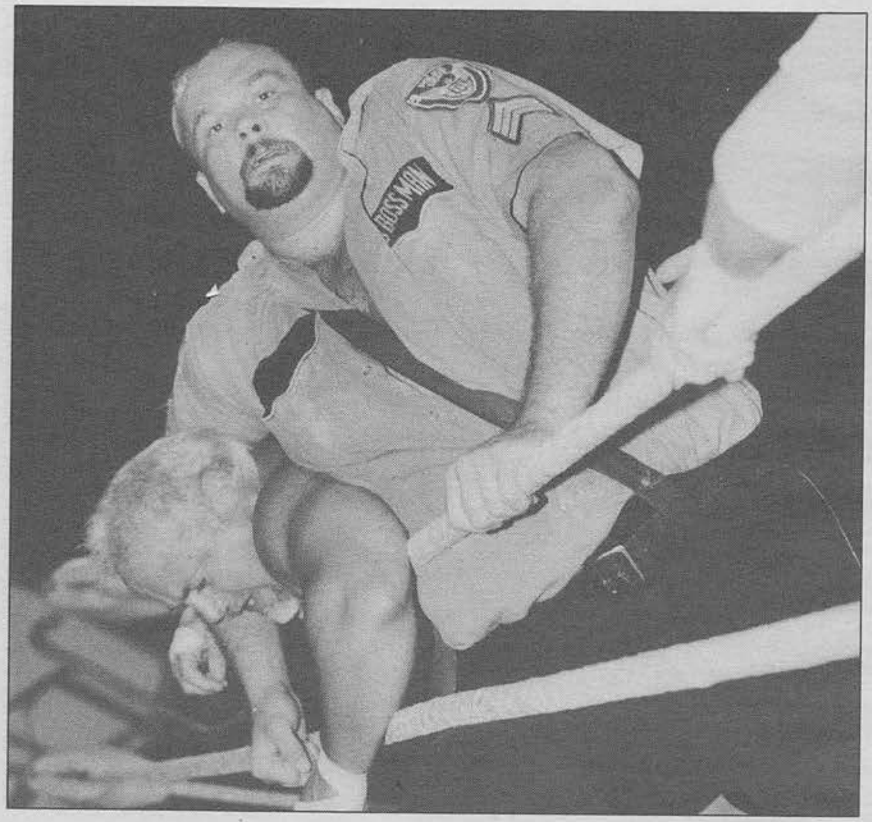
A: I don't need a special reason. Vader represents another one of those tests I was talking about. He held the World belt for a long time, so you know how good he is. It's amazing that a man of his size can move around so well. It took one of the all-time great efforts from Flair to beat him. There's another reason to respect Flair. You can learn so much just by watching him wrestle. I won't give away exactly what I learned, but I'm confident I could take Vader. It definitely will not be easy, but I'd be giving it everything I had. Of course, him being the kind of person he is gives me more incentive.

Q: You also mentioned The Colossal Kongs.

A: Yeah, I might have mentioned them in passing, but I was thinking more about Harley Race. I hate to see a guy like that have so much influence. Again, a fine champion in his day, but a man who only tries to get his way the wrong way. I'm just as concerned about bad managers in this sport as I am about wrestlers. They should get rid of managers altogether. Until they do, I'll have to be extra careful, that's all.

Q: How about pursuing a title in WCW?

A: Naturally, I'd love to win a title here. Who wouldn't? I suppose I could make a serious run at

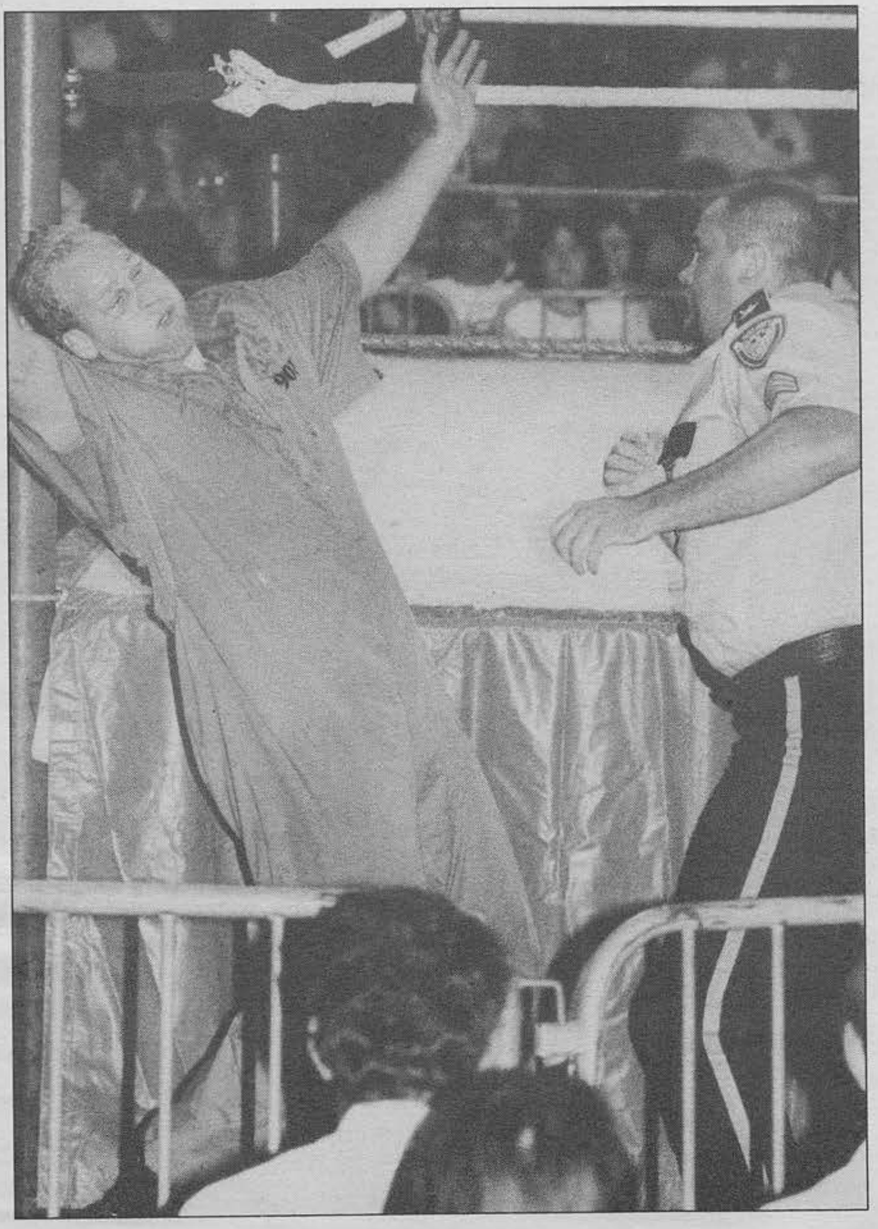


Bossman is determined to make sure justice is served; no federation is out of his jurisdiction. Above: Bossman punishes Kevin Sullivan during a card in Knoxville, Tennessee. Opposite page: Nailz will not be safe until his number—902714—is retired.

either the U.S. or TV title, but that wouldn't really satisfy me. What I want is the World belt. Right now, of course, that's held by Ric Flair and I just don't want to challenge him. I have way too much respect for the man. Sure, titles are important and the World title is most important of all, but not at that price. After a while in this sport, you realize there are things more important than winning championships. That's what my efforts to bring law and order to the ring have been all about. Over the years I've gone after quite a few men when there wasn't a title at stake. I pursued them because in my heart I knew it was the right thing to do. Maybe I lost a few title shots that way, but I absolutely do not regret it.

Q: How long do you plan to stay in WCW?

A: That depends on a lot of things. It's never been my intention to tie myself down to one area for too long. On the other hand, I'll deal with opportunities in WCW as they present themselves. We've talked about Rude and Vader and Roma. All those people have the capability to keep me occupied for a long, long time. There's a lot of activity here in WCW, but there's a lot of activity everywhere you look. I have friends—and enemies—all over wrestling. I can never guarantee where I'll be from one day to the next, but I know I'll be somewhere I'm needed.



Q: I know you like to go it alone, but do you ever see yourself being obligated to a tag team?

A: Tag team wrestling is great and I don't mind at all tagging up. I can think of at least a dozen guys I'd love to form a tag team with. Right now, though, I think the best thing for me is to wrestle on my own. When you have a tag partner you don't have your full independence. There are situations where that won't be a hindrance, but in my case it definitely would. Today I want to be able to see my opportunity and jump right in. With a tag partner I couldn't do that.

Q: I'd say that during the course of this interview you've made a lot of enemies. You may need a partner or two.

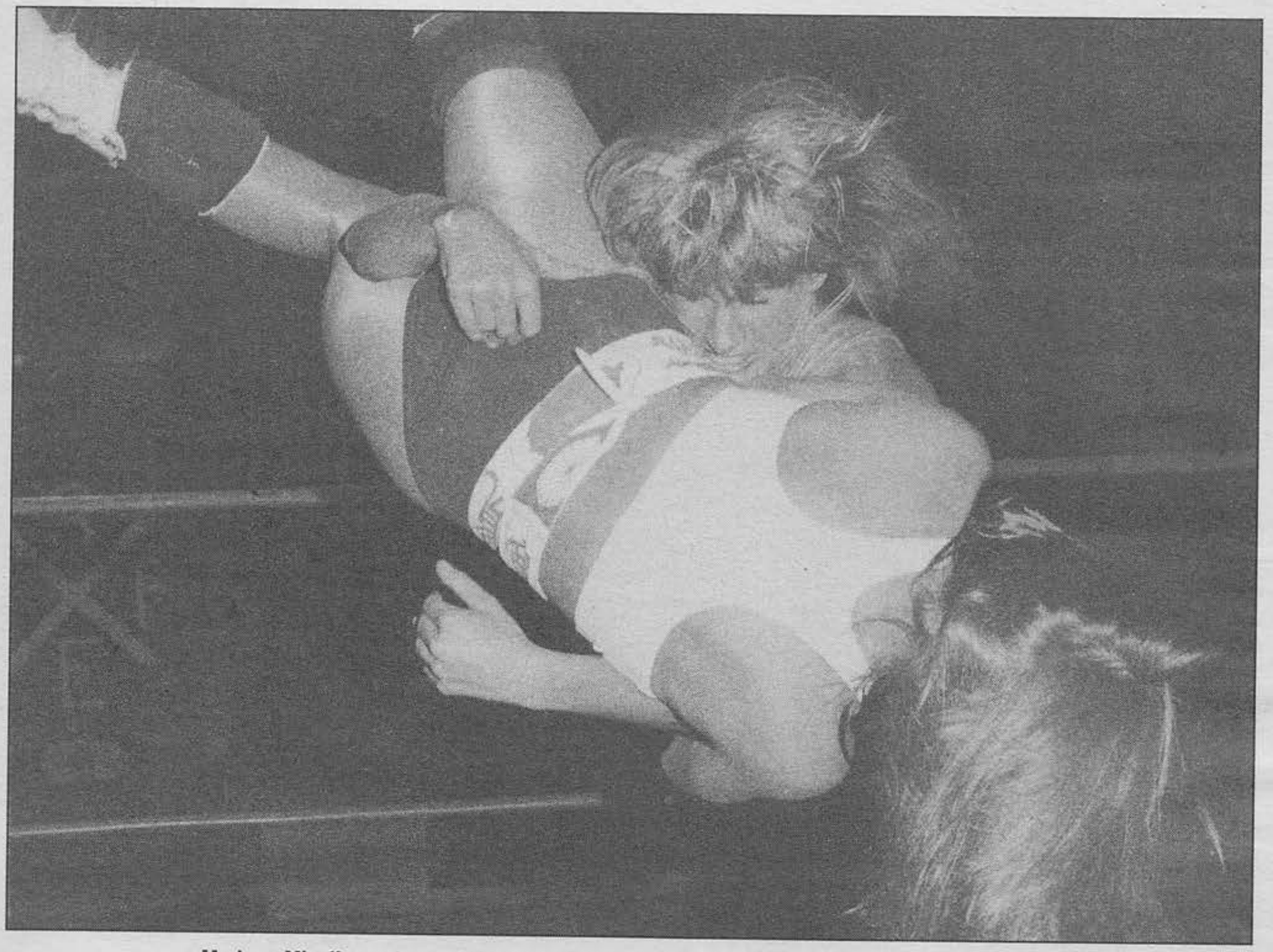
A: Maybe, but I'll take my chances, just like I did my first night in WCW. What I did that night was more than go after Rick Rude. I sent a signal to every man watching that The Boss doesn't let anything slide. Sure, sometimes you don't see me around for a while, so you think maybe you can relax. But I'm always there. I'm always watching. And just when you think you're about to get away with some major crime, I'll be right there in your face. The name might change, but the game is the same. If you're up to no good, The Boss is on your back. You can't escape. □

THE WRESTLER PANEL EXAMINES

X-RAY

ALUNDRA BLAYZE

Each month THE WRESTLER'S panel of experts will offer their candid opinions of one of wrestling's stars. Whether an up-and-coming youngster or an established superstar in his own right, our panel will always be frank and honest without fear of reprisal



Madusa Miceli may have changed her name to Alundra Blayze, but what hasn't changed is her superb athletic ability. It recently helped her win a tournament for the revived WWF Women's World title.

CAPT. LOU ALBANO

"When someone told me Alundra Blayze was in the WWF, brother, I thought they'd hired an intergalactic stripper. Then I found out she was formerly Madusa Miceli, and I was pleased! I've watched tapes of her for years, and she's one of my favorite wrestlers of either sex—a wonderful athlete, smart, exciting. She's also very easy on the eyes, man. It's going to be fun to see her try to hold on to that revived Women's title against that crazed Luna Vachon."

Capt. Lou Albano, long known as "The Guiding Light," has managed 13 tag teams to an unprecedented 16 WWF World tag team titles.

KILLER KOWALSKI

"I have high regard for today's women wrestlers, and have trained a few like Misty Blue Simmes. So I respect Alundra, Madusa, whatever you want to call her. She was one tough lady while she was in WCW, though she rarely wrestled there. I only hope for her sake she doesn't fall prey to the fans' cheers. Just wrestle hard, do the martial arts and aerial moves she's so good at, and she should have a lengthy reign as WWF Women's World champion."

Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rulebreakers in the sport's history, runs a wrestling school in Reading, Massachusetts.

DORY FUNK JR.

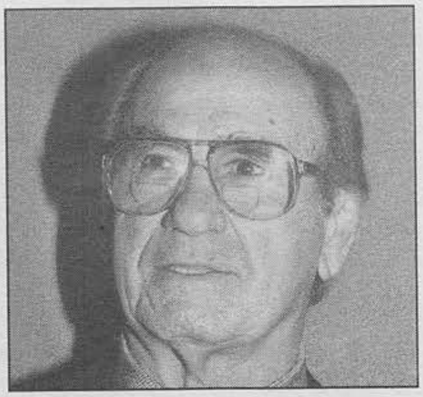
"She's a fundamentally sound wrestler, has been for years, but she can be beaten. I'm certain Luna Vachon is furious she wasn't invited into the WWF women's tournament, and she'll take her frustrations out on Blayze. Alundra is bigger and stronger than Luna, but then, so was Sherri Martel. I like Blayze's style, but when you're the champ, everyone's gunning for you. I hope she remembers what it was like when she was AWA Women's champion."

Dory Funk Jr. held the NWA World championship from 1969 to 1973. He still wrestles from time to time.

NICK BOCKWINKEL

"Alundra Blayze has more in her repertoire than any other woman wrestler I know, and more than most men. She can beat you on the mat, use her aerial skills, or kick you into submission. But take it from me, that can be as much a curse as a blessing. When you're that skilled, sometimes you have too many choices at your disposal, and you can choose the wrong one. If she knows what to use, and when to use it, she'll dominate the women's scene in the WWF."

Nick Bockwinkel is a four-time AWA champion. He makes appearances as guest TV commentator for independent federations.



LOU THESZ

"When she was Madusa Miceli, she did all she could to make people take women's wrestling seriously. Now with a new name and WWF exposure, she has a stage to show off her talents. If I were her, I'd avoid being too flashy; there will be a lot of rivals who could take advantage of her. Don't do too much at once, Alundra. Let the fans gradually grow familiar with your considerable skills. Give them time, and I'm certain you'll be very, very popular."

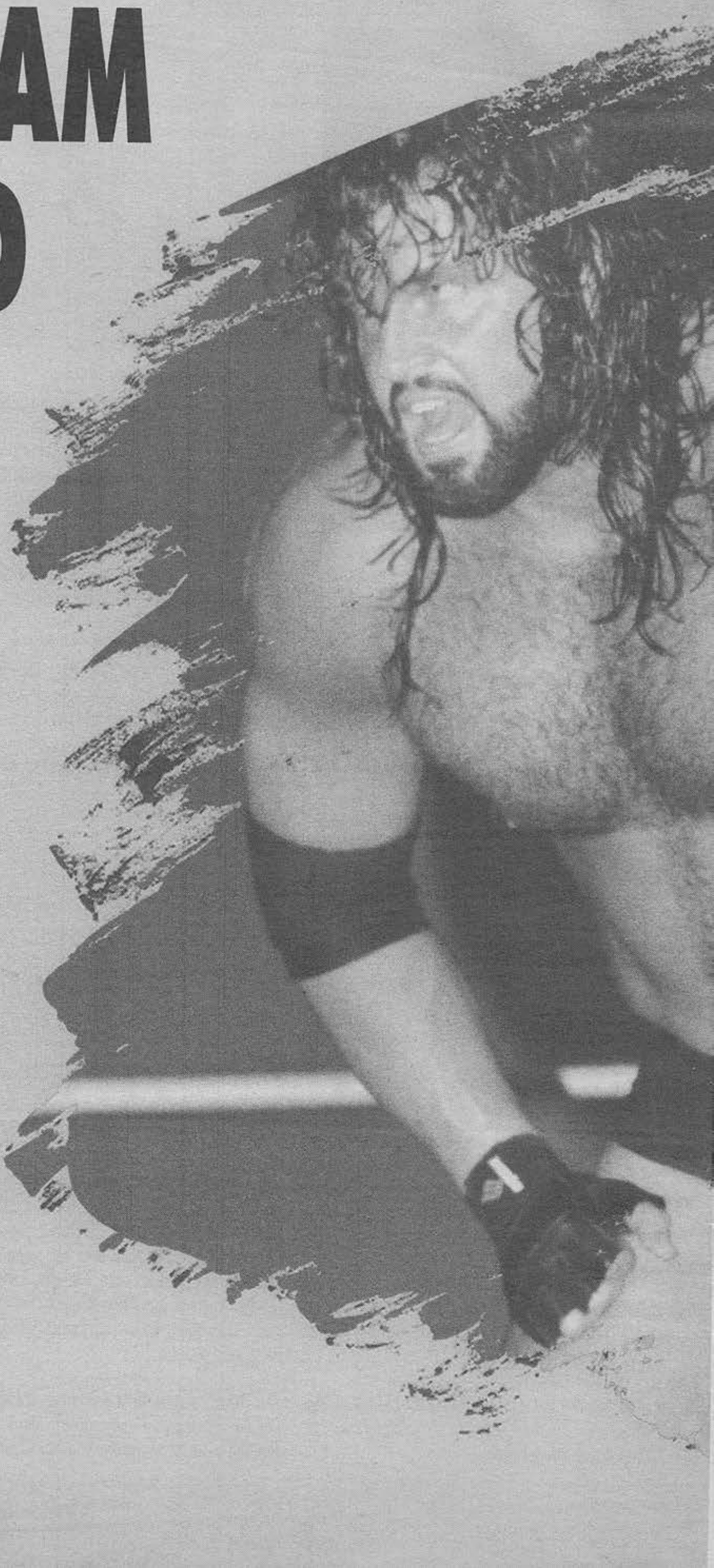
Lou Thesz held the NWA World title six times during his fabulous 50-year career. Many consider him the greatest all-around wrestler in history.

GORDON SOLIE

"I know her well from her days in The Dangerous Alliance, and she was certainly dangerous. Anyone who crossed her path was putting themselves in peril. She's shrewd, crafty, and very charismatic. No matter what name you call her, Madusa is probably the most purely athletic woman wrestler in history. Others have had more size and strength, but no one else combines her ability, tenacity, and beauty. It'll be fun to watch her wrestle."

Gordon Solie has expertly analyzed pro wrestling on television for 35 years. He periodically appears on WCW broadcasts.

HAS ADAM BOMBED OUT?

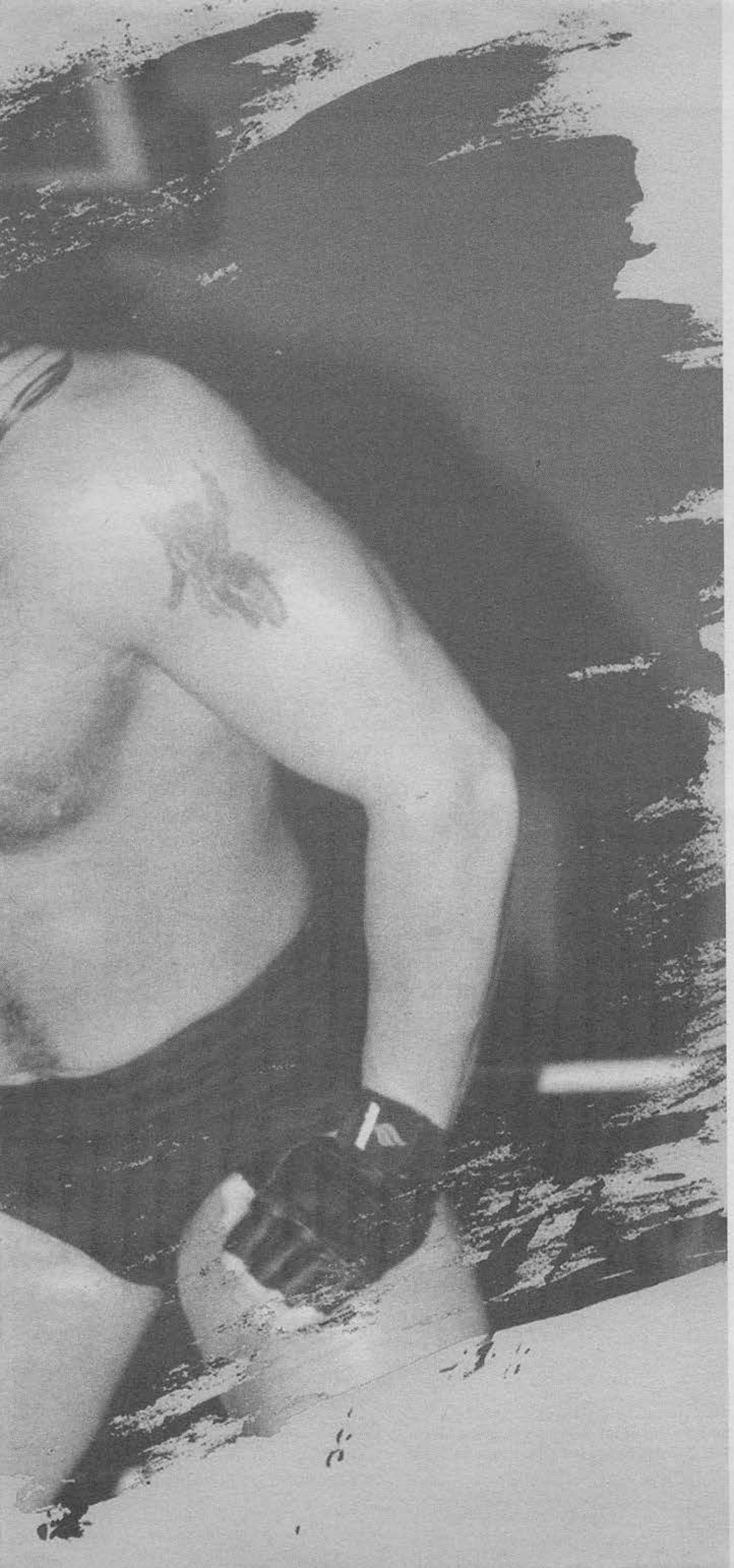


Just this past fall, Adam Bomb was the hottest young prospect in the WWF. Now people are already calling him a has-been. Is he going through a transitional stage, or is he another muscleman with nothing else?

By Dave Lenker

HIS SUPPORTERS CLAIM it's too early for a judgment. His detractors say he's yet another overrated muscleman who does nothing but punch and kick. Calling him the second coming of Sid Vicious is a compliment and a dig. Vicious has a lot of talent, but where did it get him?

Although it's too early to write the book on Adam Bomb, this much seems clear: After a promising arrival in the WWF, the young,



big man has crashed powerfully to earth. No longer do opponents fear wrestling Bomb. In fact, he's looked upon as the perfect steppingstone to bigger and better things.

Has Adam bombed out? Or is he merely preparing to detonate?

In a column in *Inside Wrestling,* this magazine's sister publication, columnist Dave Rosenbaum made the big mistake of comparing Adam Bomb to New York Yankees' phenom Brien Taylor. Rosenbaum thought it was a compliment. He pointed out that Taylor had trouble at the start of last season in Double-A, but was doing fine by mid-season and was scheduled for a promotion to Triple-A this spring. By September, he reasoned, Taylor would be in the majors.

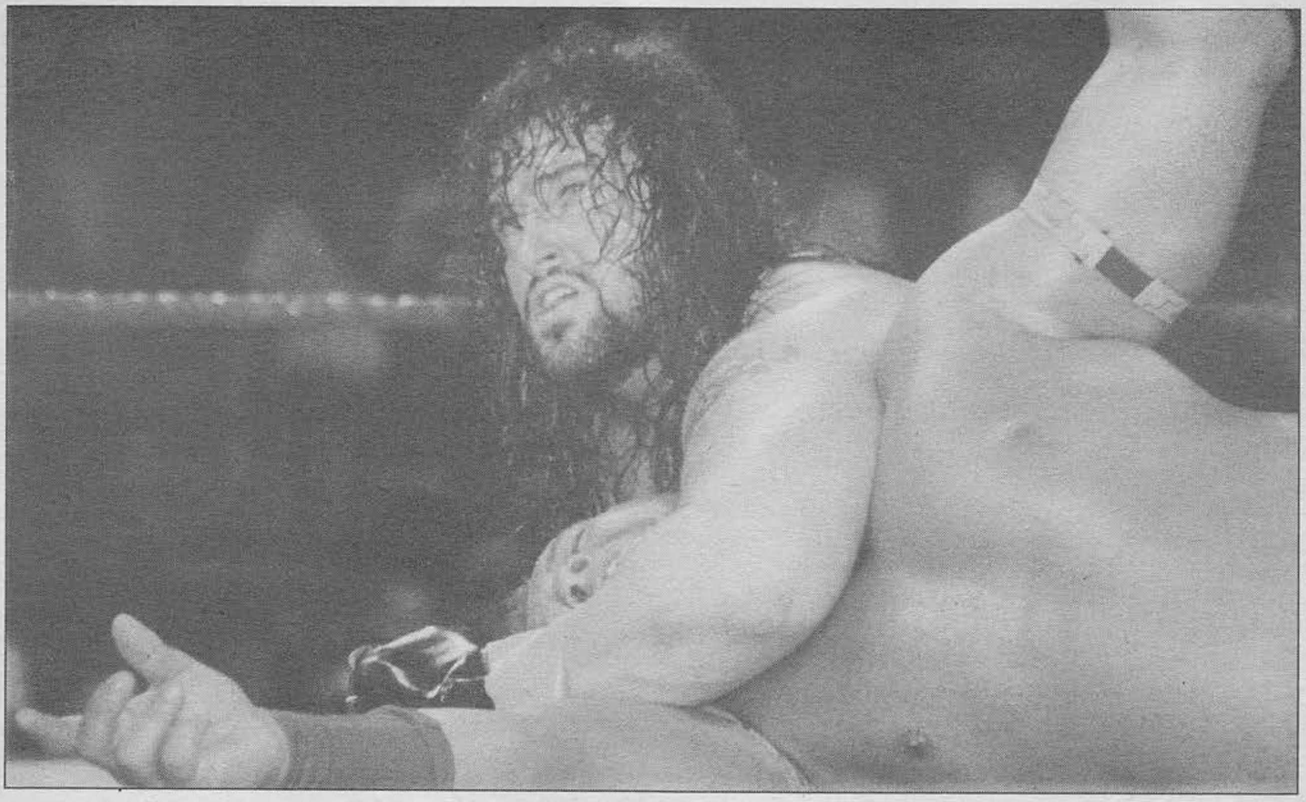
Perhaps the comparison is truer than he thought. Taylor got into a fight during the off-season and dislocated his pitching shoulder. He underwent shoulder surgery and will miss the entire season. Taylor's progress has been set back at least a year and maybe two. His major league arrival is now planned for 1996 or '97.

Bomb hasn't suffered any major injuries, but he has certainly lost his aura of intimidation.

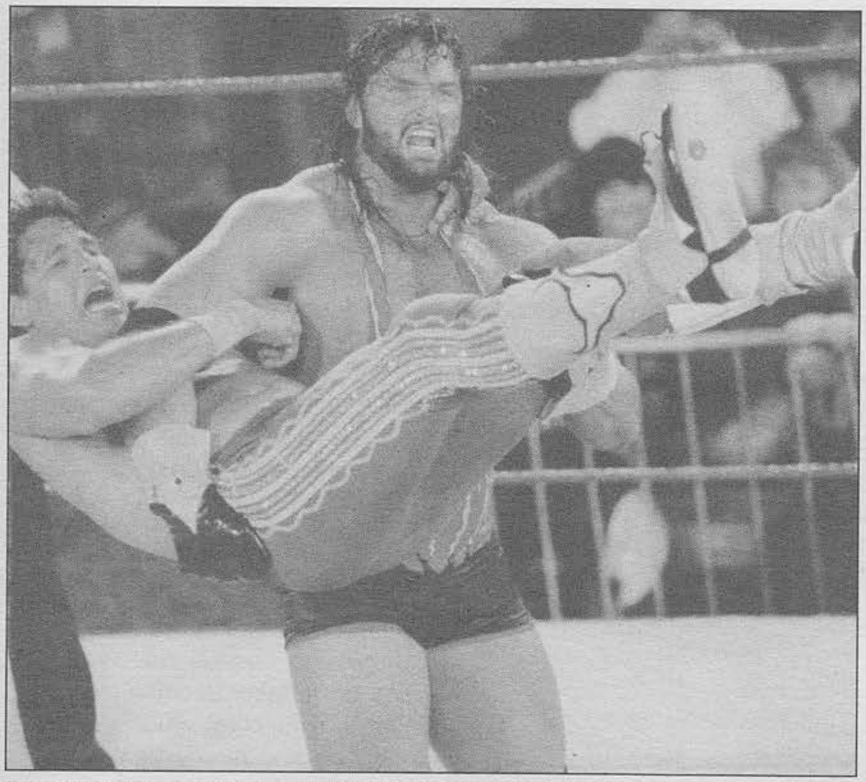
"Nobody looks upon him as the next hot wrestler anymore," said WWF expert Thomas Pilliard. "He's just another big muscleman trying to work his way up. Everyone knows being strong is no longer a guarantee of success anymore."

Bomb made an early splash in the WWF by going after Tatanka, effectively dealing with The Kid, and losing several close calls to The Undertaker in coffin matches. He showed real guts in those matches and nearly beat the former WWF World champion.

It has been downhill since then. After taking care of Kid, Bomb's



It wasn't long ago that Adam Bomb was considered *the* hot newcomer in the WWF. But that role has been taken over by Tatanka. Why has Bomb's career stalled?



When Bomb has it all together, he remains among the most dangerous wrestlers in any federation. Tito Santana will vouch for that! Unfortunately for him, those brilliant moments have been few in recent months.

most notable victories were against Virgil. That's hardly a resume-maker. Ted DiBiase's former bodyguard is nothing but a middle-of-the-card competitor.

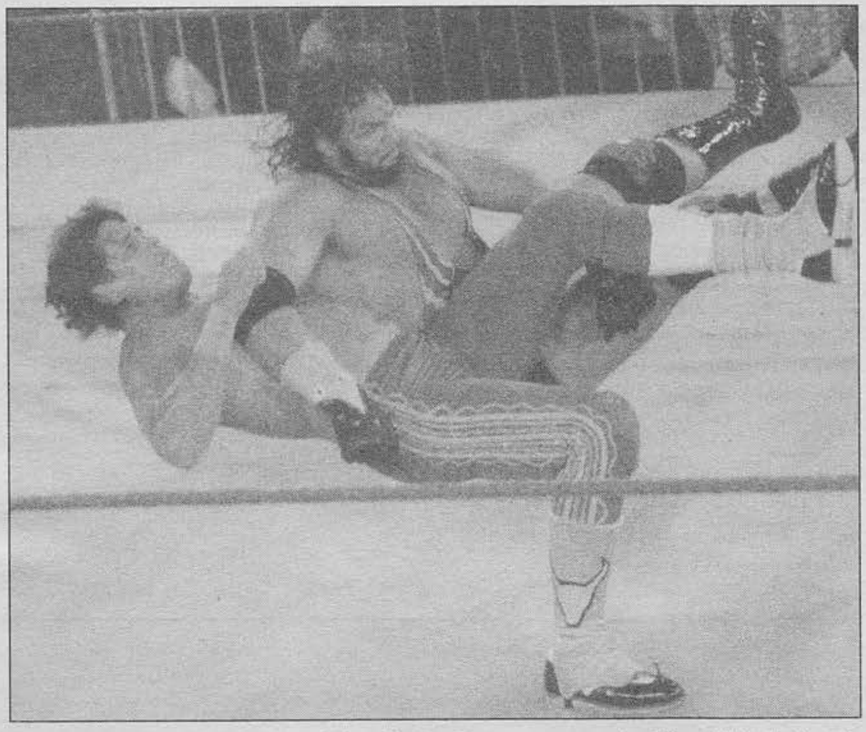
The losses were more telling. Razor Ramon and Kid defeated Bomb and Johnny Polo when Ramon pinned Bomb. That's not the ending everyone expected to that match; it would have looked a lot better if Ramon pinned Polo.

At the Survivor Series, Bomb, Diesel, Rick Martel, and Irwin R. Schyster lost to Kid, Marty Jannetty, Ramon, and Randy Savage. Bomb blew his moment in the spotlight. Weeks later, The Smokin' Gunns beat Bomb and Rick Martel. Mixed in were more victories over Virgil and a couple of preliminary wrestlers named Tim NcNeany and Brian Walsh.

Bomb's momentum has been halted. Although he still has moments of brilliance—he has tremendous agility and aerial abili-

ty for a man his size—he has been unable to put it all together. Blame it on manager Harvey Wippleman, if you will, because Wippleman has never done anything positive for a wrestler. But Bomb—who entered the WWF alongside Polo—must take responsibility for his career. He has the most to lose.

Bomb entered the WWF last spring with Johnny Polo as his manager, but the two went their separate ways. Bomb then brought in Harvey Wippleman to manage, and the marriage simply hasn't worked.



For a wrestler his size, Bomb has better-than-average scientific skill. That only makes his recent slump all the more confounding; with his tools, he should be a legitimate World or Intercontinental contender.

"Going with Wippleman was a mistake," said a WWF rulebreaker. "Adam's immature and needs a manager, but it's definitely not Wippleman. It's too bad Bobby Heenan left the federation. He could have helped him. Jim Cornette wouldn't be a bad choice, either. Wrestlers never get complacent under Cornette."

Bomb doesn't seem complacent. He has tremendous energy in the ring and can still think his way out of difficult situations. The difference now is that Adam no longer turns defeats into victories. He merely delays the outcome.

This leads many WWF observers to suggest that he's experiencing wrestling's version of the sophomore jinx. He made his initial impact and now needs a follow-up. At first, he could surprise opponents. The element of surprise is gone.

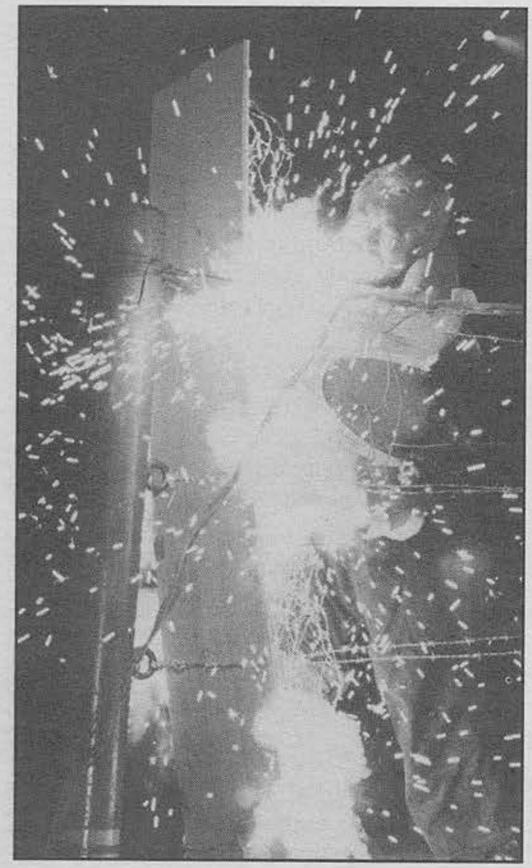
Now we're waiting to see what else Bomb has to offer. Perhaps he has nothing. Or perhaps, while taking his losses, he is privately regrouping.

One thing is certain: The WWF will give Bomb every opportunity to succeed. He is the perfect WWF star and might turn out to be a very good fan favorite. After all, Bomb fits the comic book character mold and is usually surrounded by children in arena parking lots. His name is corny but catchy. The WWF knows it has a potential gold mine on its hands.

But is Adam Bomb fool's gold? He has plenty of time to work out of this slump. He, like every other wrestler, is only as good as his last match. The last match was a loss. The next one might be a win.

Wait for the explosion. Who will blow up: Adam Bomb ... or his opponents? □

We're SHOCKED At What's Happening!



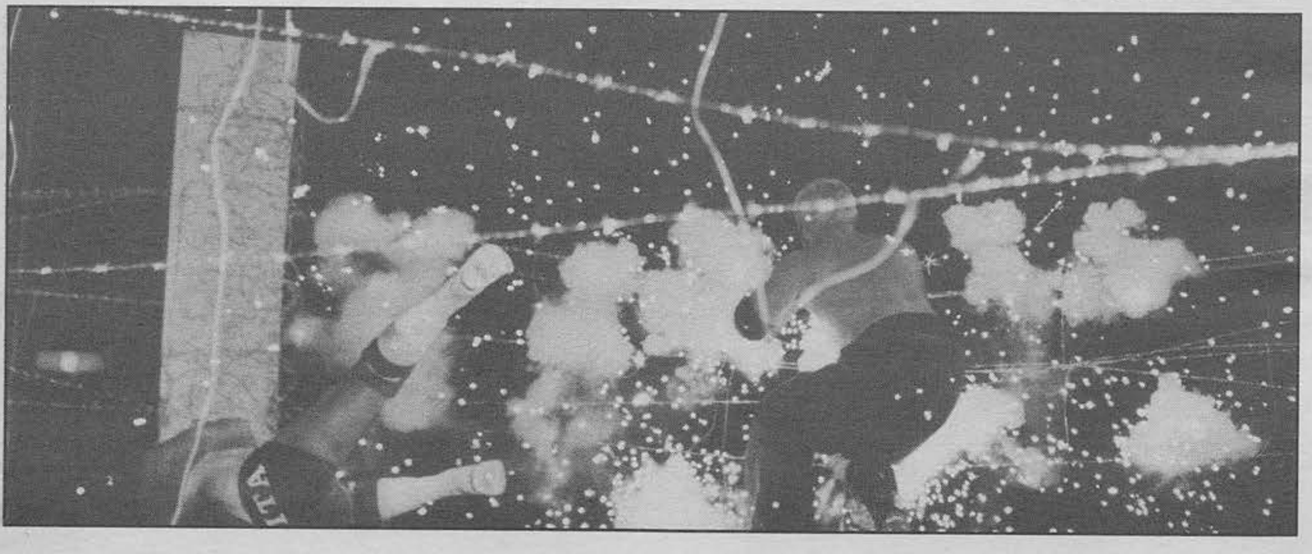
Mitsuhiro Matsunaga narrowly avoided serious injury when he was thrown into this shock-laden corner of the ring. Japanese fans call him "Mr. Danger"; we think "Mr. Masochist" would be a more appropriate title.

ELECTR

A CROWD OF 12,500 bloodthirsty wrestling fans packed the Harumi International Dome on December 8, 1993. That they were bloodthirsty Japanese wrestling fans is of no matter, because this kind of blood lust is unfortunately common in wrestling. They were there to see something called an "electrified explosive barbed wire match."

In Philadelphia, ECW fans routinely watch matches featuring bats, explosives, and other lethal devices. The bloodthirsty American wrestling fans love it.

In Memphis, five USWA fans put their sordid dreams to life when they held a leather strap designed to contain the violence inside the ring. On a



You've heard references to "sparks flying" at sports events. One wonders if Matsunaga, Atsushi Onita, and the promoters of this card mistakenly took this English-language phrase literally!

OCUTIONS?!!

What's Going on Here?

more humorous, though equally disgusting, note, two midgets grappled in a loser-eats-dog food match.

This universal gore and distaste makes us wonder: What has happened to wrestling?

Rings explode. Wrestlers eat pet products. Ring ropes are decorated with barbed wire far more dangerous than the usual brand. Kevin Sullivan, one of the craziest wrestlers in the world, is allowed to compete in a match in which steel spikes are sanctioned.

What might happen next? Watch *Hard Copy* or *A Current Affair* for inspiration.

In an age when competition for the entertainment dollar is at a peak, when people can stay at home and watch their favorite team on TV as easily as they can pick and choose from a myriad of Saturday night options, wrestling promoters are working overtime and letting their imaginations run wild.

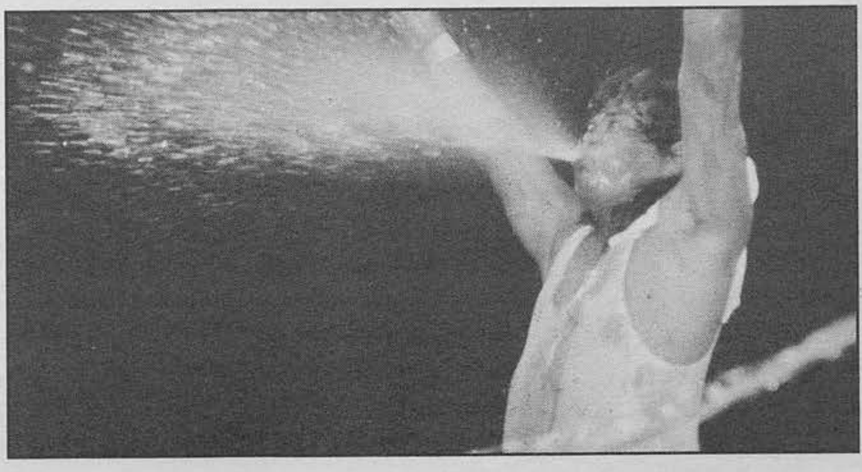
Not long ago, two men in hand-to-hand combat was enough to satisfy wrestling fans. Now it takes exploding rings, barbed wire, and even dog food to bring out the crowds. At least that's what some promoters think

The goal: Get people to wrestling matches.

The method: Promise gore, blood, and possibly death.

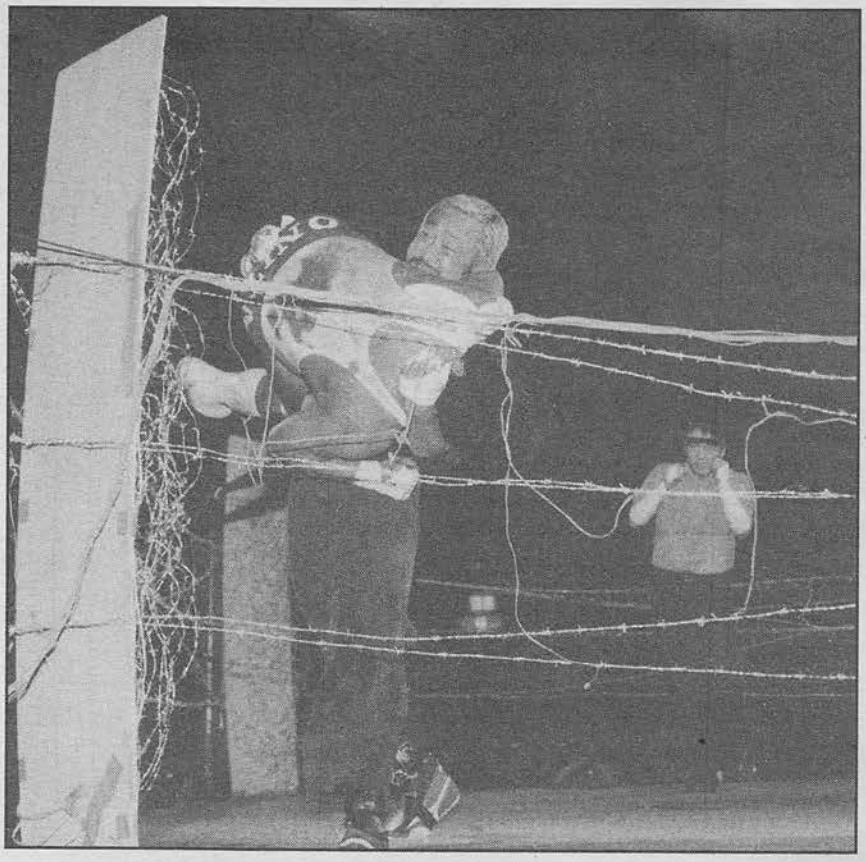
Our conclusion: Something is very wrong here.

Once upon a time, we at this magazine wrote that steel cage matches should only be held when there is no other way of settling a long-running feud. Our rationalization was simple: The traditional



A bloodied Onita celebrates victory in this lethal match. A few more bouts like this one, and his skin will make Sabu's look like that of a newborn.

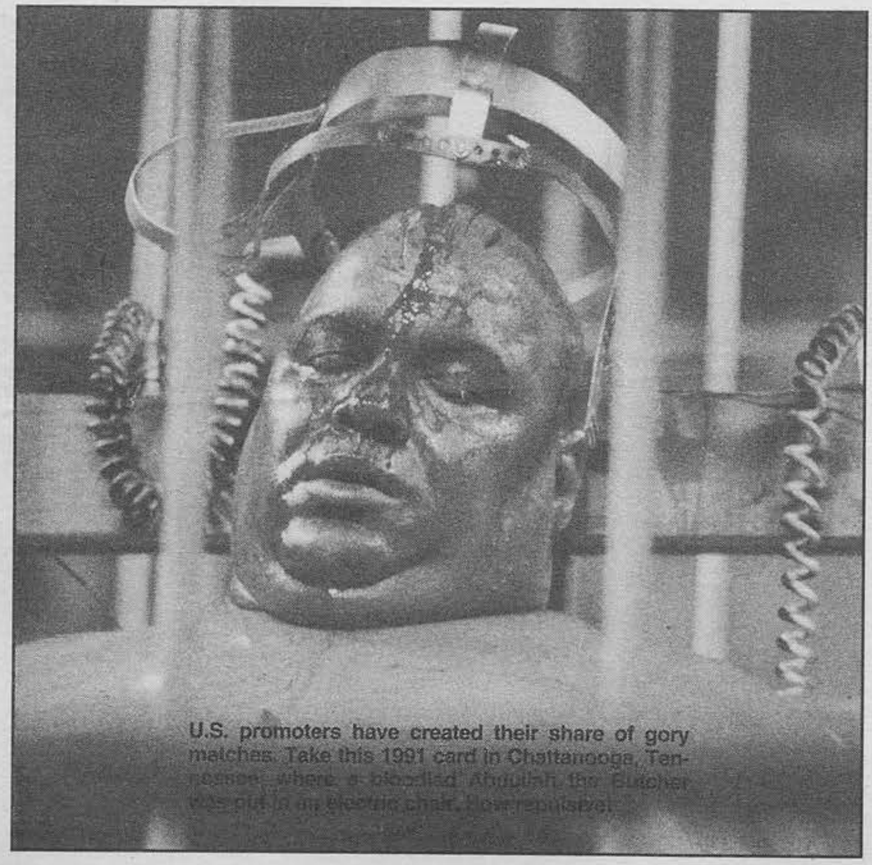
Whatever happened to the good old days, when wrestlers were content to wrestle? Are Matsunaga and Onita oblivious to the risks they're taking, or are promoters pressuring them into taking such matches?



ring is an adequate setting for wrestling matches. Anything else is blasphemy.

Promoters, wrestlers, and fans obviously disagreed. Falls-count-anywhere, barbed wire, Texas death, chain, and no-disqualification matches have been commonplace for decades. Fans are disappointed if a card doesn't include at least one non-traditional match, and promoters are more than willing to cater to their desires. Wrestlers, knowing that courage means money, happily compete in these offbeat matches all the time.

But evolution is natural for humans, even if it turns out to be reverse evolution. Look at the tradeoffs modern society has made. Cars for air pollution, air travel for destruction of the ozone, a population boom for destruction of wetlands and rain forests.



U.S. promoters have created their share of gory matches. Take this 1991 card in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where a bloodied Abdullah the Butcher was put in an electric chair. How repulsive!

In wrestling, promoters and wrestlers have come up with new ways to entice and titillate fans. Nights of horrible gore, times when the wrestlers barely escape the ring with their lives, are not deterrents to more dangerous matches. They are incentives.

In that electrified explosive barbed wire match, Atsushi Onita wrestled Mitsuhiro Matsunaga, affectionately known as "Mr. Danger" in Japanese wrestling lore. Matsunaga spent a large portion of the match with the barbed wire wrapped around his legs. Both wrestlers bled profusely. Sparks literally flew every time a wrestler's skin brushed against the spiked wire. After winning, Onita's first trip was to the emergency medical room. Both wrestlers received tetanus shots.

"It wasn't even that bad," said

Japan correspondent Koichi Yoshizawa. "I've seen far worse. The match was indoors, so they decided to cut down on the electricity. I've seen a lot of outdoor matches under far more elaborate conditions, where the ring actually caught fire."

The fans loved every minute of the match. Afterward, all they did was scream for more. Surely, their wishes will be granted. We can hardly wait.

Violence is common in ECW, arguably the most vicious federation in North America. Terry Funk recently won the ECW title when Shane Douglas hit Sabu over the head. That same card included a "body count match," where a member of each team was handcuffed to the cage.

An attraction-filled Garden State Wrestling Alliance card featured an "anything-goes bunkhouse match," a "tar and feather match," and a "prince of darkness blindfold match."

On USWA's infamous dog food card, there was also a "loser-gets-10 lashes match" and the leather strap match.

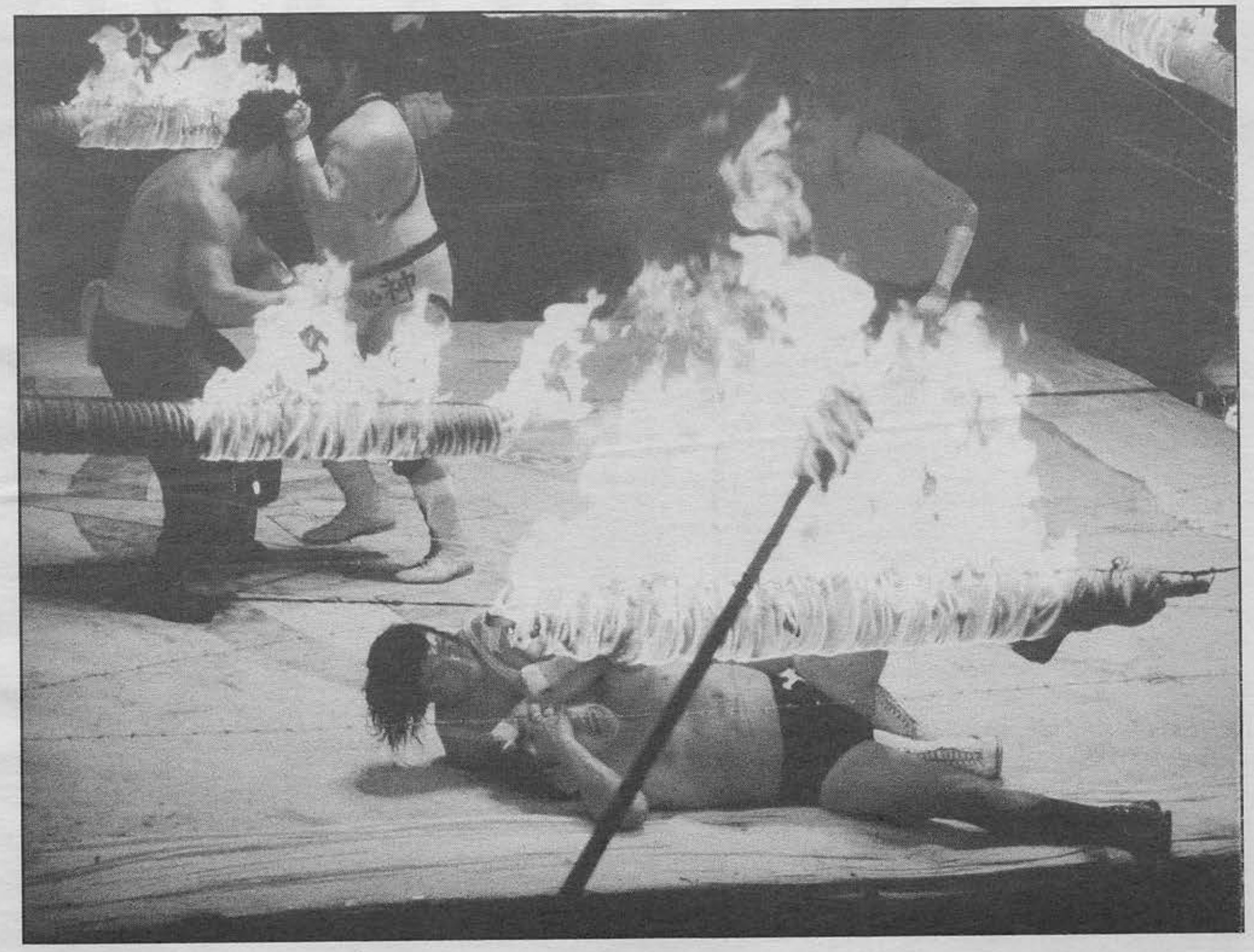
Smoky Mountain Wrestling had Bobby Blaze battle Chris Candido in a "loser-gets-tarred-and-feathered match." Whatever happened to the pure thrill of victory and agony of defeat? The Bullet somehow beat Sullivan in a "Singapore spike match." Believe us, Mr. Bullet took his life into his hands. Maybe Bob Armstrong's, too.

Surprisingly, the usually circus-like WWF has been mostly free of these violent gimmick matches. Perhaps Vince McMahon is afraid of alienating his youthful audience. Not so for WCW, which at SuperBrawl '94 had two "Thundercage matches," including one between Ric Flair and Big Van Vader for the World title.

The editors of THE WRESTLER aren't ready to surrender, but we're far past the point where we think our condemnations will amount to a hill of beans. We can only hope the people who run this sport come to their senses.

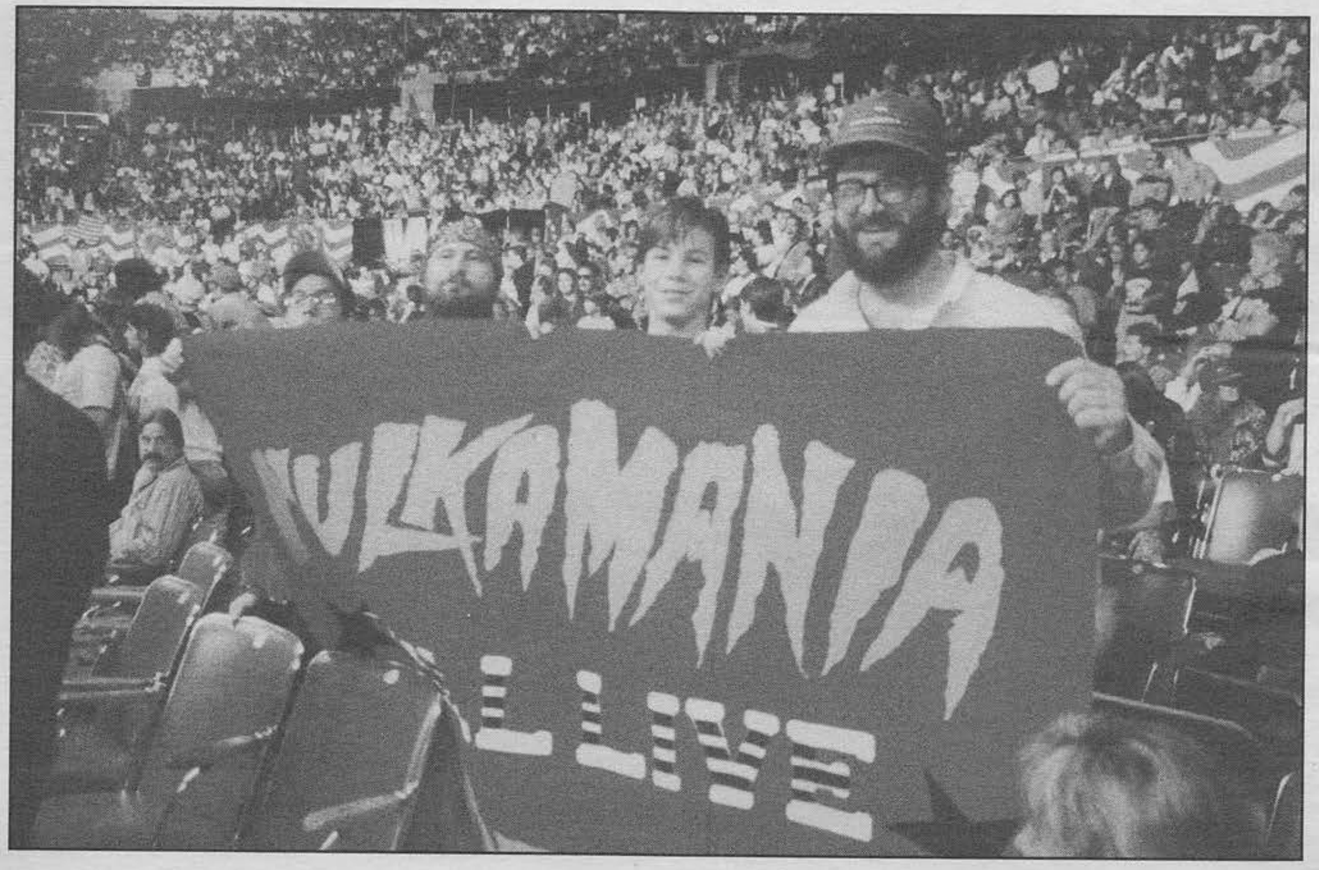
Unfortunately, we're asking for a miracle. □

Onita and Tarzan Goto challenge Sabu and The Sheik in this 1992 fire and barbed wire match in Japan. What will it take for wrestlers, promoters, and fans to realize a potential tragedy awaits?



WCW Fans Demand:

"WE WANT



By Andy Rodriguez

WHO WOULD HAVE imagined, five years ago, that Jesse Ventura and Gene Okerlund would broadcast in WCW, or that Jim Ross would broadcast in the WWF? Who would have imagined that Ric Flair would compete in the WWF, or that Hulk Hogan would compete in WCW?

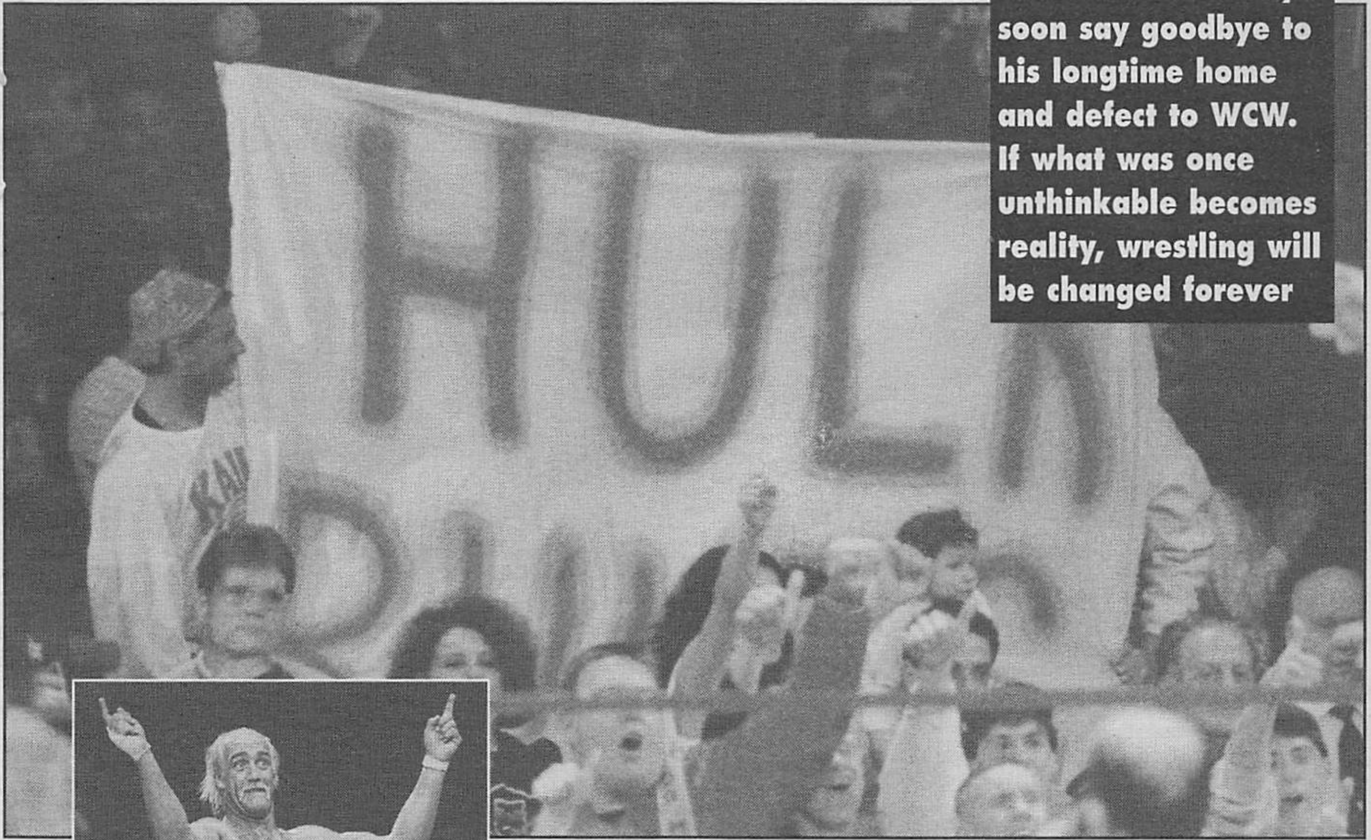
What's that you say about the last part of that question? Hulk Hogan doesn't compete in WCW? True, but he may soon.

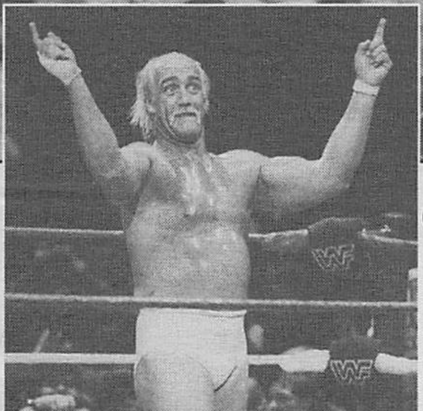
A growing number of fans of WCW certainly want him there. They want to see Hulkamania run wild in their arenas, too.

"It would be the greatest thing to happen to WCW since Ted Turner bought the organization," said Harold Newmark of Atlanta. "Heck, the Olympics are coming here to Atlanta. Hogan's arrival would be just as anticipated by many of us."

Hogan's impact on WCW would be undeniable. But could it

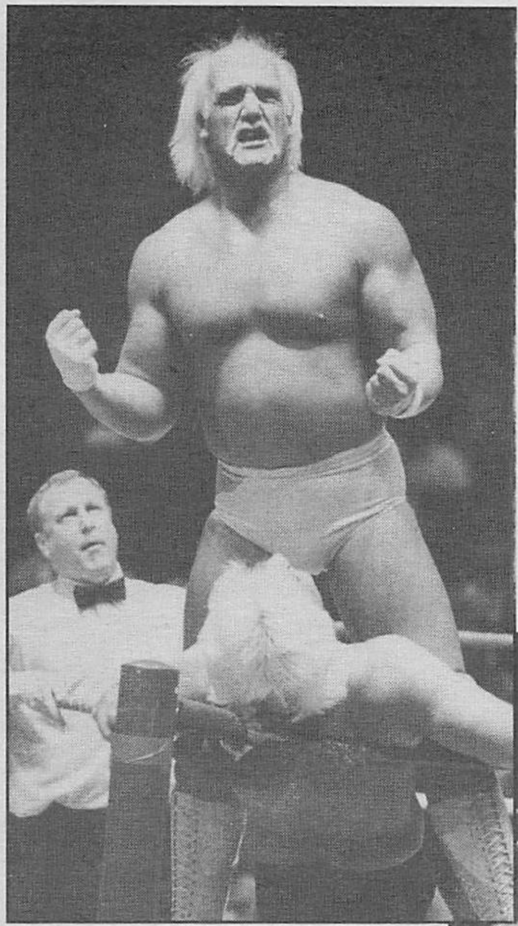
Unwilling to compete full-time in the WWF, the "Hulkster" may soon say goodbye to his longtime home and defect to WCW. If what was once unthinkable becomes reality, wrestling will be changed forever





HOGAN!"

Why Their Plea May Soon Be Answered



In 1991, Ric Flair entered the WWF and battled Hulk Hogan in a memorable series of matches. Then Flair returned to WCW in 1993. Don't be surprised if Hogan renews the rivalry, this time on WCW turf!

really happen?

For a decade, the "Hulkster" has been the embodiment of the WWF. The immense popularity and success of the five-time former WWF World champion allowed the organization to grow and expand into something of a cultural phenomenon. It is fair to say the WWF would not be where it is had it not been for Hogan.

Lately, though, Hogan has been more concerned with acting than wrestling in the WWF. Say what you will about his theatrical ability, but he seems determined to make a career performing not only in the ring, but in front of a camera.

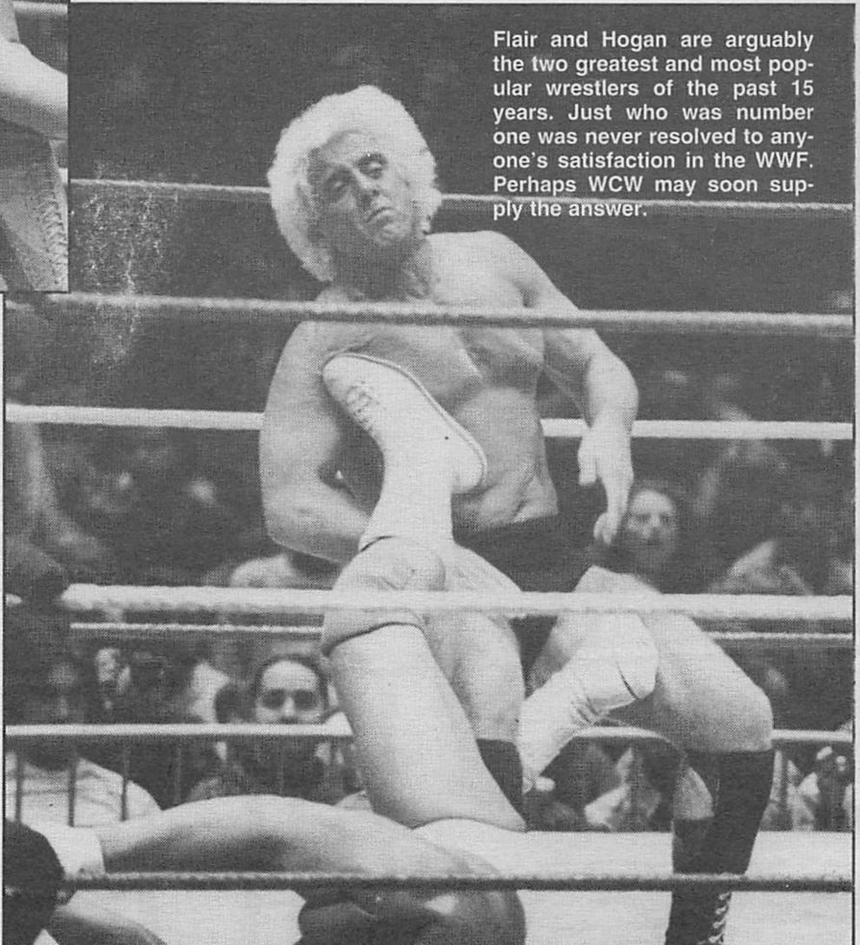
After three movies, Hogan has moved on to a syndicated television series called *Thunder In Paradise*. Joining him in that venture is a fellow by the name of Sting. You know, the WCW superstar.

They struck the deal last May in Japan. And, say insiders, there was more on the agenda that day than a TV series.

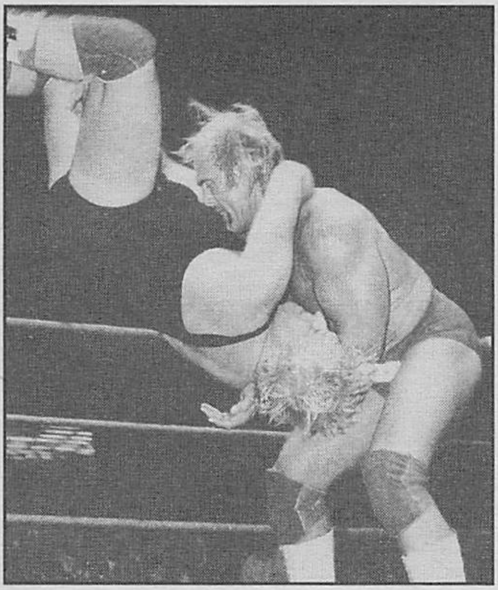
"Definitely, they talked wrestling," said one. "They talked extensively about both WCW and the WWF. Of course, there were no commitments made either way, but I hear Hogan was very interested in WCW. He was especially interested in finding out what Ric Flair had been up to."

Hogan has not forgotten the great matches he and Flair had when the "Nature Boy" arrived in the WWF in 1991. For years, Hogan vs. Flair had been atop everyone's "Dream Match" list. It only happened after Flair made the bold move and jumped to the WWF. A resumption of that feud would take an even bolder move by the "Hulkster."

He may be that bold. When he and Jimmy Hart visited Flair's gym in North Carolina, they weren't talking about fighting



Flair and Hogan are arguably the two greatest and most popular wrestlers of the past 15 years. Just who was number one was never resolved to anyone's satisfaction in the WWF. Perhaps WCW may soon supply the answer.



"If Hulk thinks being with WCW is in his best interests, he'll go there without a second thought," said another associate. "He'll be very shrewd about it. He won't worry about breaking any friendships or hurting any feelings. It will be a business decision. Back a couple of years ago the steroid allegations hurt him, but he stuck it out. I'm not so sure he'd do it a second time."

Reportedly, WCW officials would respect Hogan's wish to maintain a part-time wrestling schedule. They would allow him to take as much time in Hollywood as he wants. They most likely also would be very generous in granting him World title matches. For the "Hulkster," there would be no climbing the ladder of contention. He'd get plenty of shots at his old foe Flair.

"Good thing for him," said one rival sarcastically. "He's beaten Flair before. He couldn't win the belt from Yokozuna again. I think if he goes it'll be because the competition in the WWF has gotten too tough for him."

Perhaps, but most fans in WCW probably don't care to hear Hogan's reasons for coming to WCW. They'd just be happy to have him.

"You're talking about one of the greatest wrestlers of all-time," said Clark Norris of Greenville, South Carolina. "I've been sticking up for WCW over the WWF for years, and I would love for those WWF fans to see that Hulk wouldn't just come in here and have a cakewalk."

"I'm thinking about starting a petition to get WCW to make every effort to sign Hogan," said Joyce Butterworth of Charlotte, North Carolina. "If we all put our voices together, they'll have to listen to us. I'm really excited by this. I really think it could happen sometime soon."

Hulk Hogan in WCW. It still doesn't sound right. But 1993 saw some tremendous changes in wrestling.

In 1994, we may see the biggest change yet. □

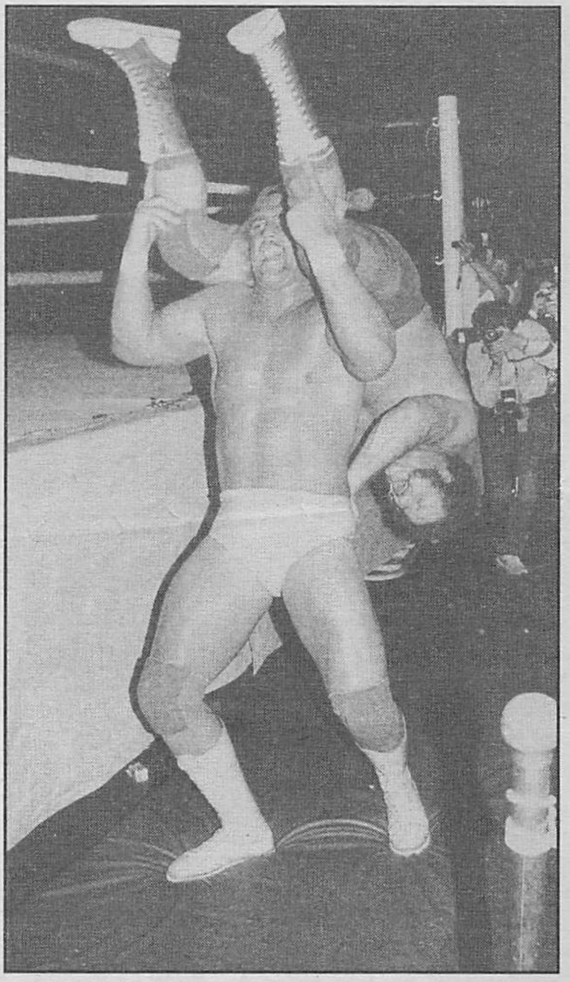
Flair, but they were taking a very significant step.

"It would have been almost impossible a couple of years ago to imagine Hogan or any other WWF star visiting a WCW star so openly," said former AWA World champion Nick Bockwinkel. "Now, Hogan meets Sting and Flair very publicly. The climate definitely has changed."

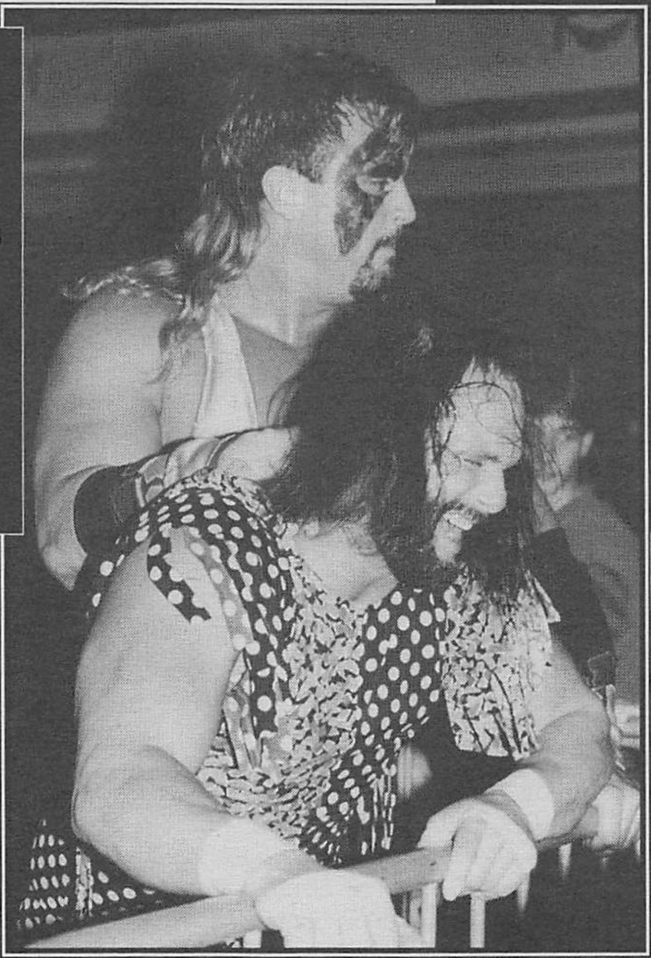
Admittedly, the talk about a Hogan defection is at this point speculation. There is no evidence that Hulk is about to make the move. Those who doubt he would leave the WWF for WCW point to his long association with the federation. They say he is loyal to the WWF and to Vince McMahon.

"I just can't see Hulk going off to work for Ted Turner," said one friend. "He realizes what McMahon and the WWF have done for him. I'm not saying Hulk is nothing without them. I'm just saying Hogan knows that, be it acting or wrestling, his best opportunities lie with the WWF."

Others argue that considering the WWF's recent steroid and sex scandals, this would be the right time for Hogan to leave, and they believe he would have no reservations in doing so.



Flair wouldn't be the only ex-WWF figure Hogan would encounter should he join WCW. He might also again cross paths with Bobby Heenan (top left), who is reportedly set to join WCW as an announcer, and Harley Race (above), now manager of former federation champion Big Van Vader.



Randy Savage grimaces with pain as he is attacked by Crush outside the ring.

"MACHO MAN'S" LAST STAND?

IT'S CRUSH OR BE CRUSHED FOR RANDY SAVAGE

Randy Savage has a dilemma. The "Macho Man" feels obligated to his fans to defeat Crush. But while Crush has allied himself with Yokozuna, Savage also feels obligated by his unofficial title to go it alone

By Chris Bernucca

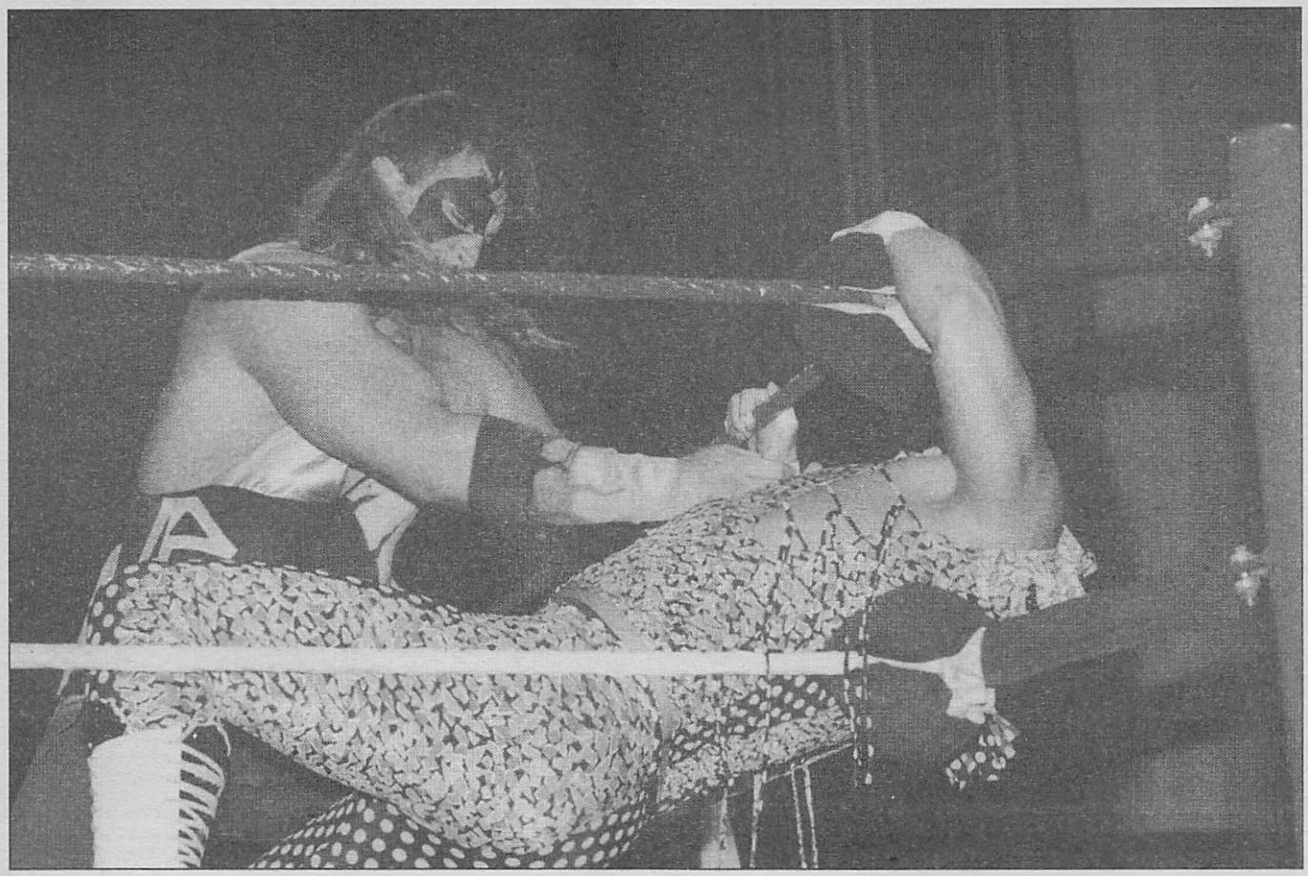
IN MOST SPORTS, nicknames are earned through performance. In football, there was Mike Curtis of the Baltimore Colts, who was simply known as "The Animal" for the crazed way in which he played middle linebacker. In baseball, Sal Maglie of the New York Giants

came to be called "The Barber" for the close shaves he gave hitters awaiting his pitches.

In wrestling, however, many nicknames are self-proclaimed and precede a man's reputation. Based on his record in the ring, Barry "The Winner" Horowitz is anything but one. "Mr. Perfect" Curt Hennig has been considerably less than perfect over the past year. And any wrestler calling himself the "Macho Man" in a sport of macho men has an awful lot to prove when he steps into the squared circle.

Throughout his career, Randy Savage has lived up to his nickname. He has never backed down from a challenge. But being known as the "Macho Man" can take its toll. The nickname connotes a certain level of toughness that has made Savage sort of the WWF's Shane, against whom young rule-breaking gunslingers must test their mettle. Just take a look at what Savage has had to face up to in the last two years:

•In late-1991, Savage charged



Crush sends the "Macho Man" reeling against the turnbuckles in a recent encounter. Savage has always found it nearly impossible to back down from a feud, even when it's in his best interests.

the ring from his announcer's chair when Jake "The Snake" Roberts challenged his manhood. Savage became entangled in the ropes and was bitten by Roberts' python, Damian, while Roberts slapped Savage's then-wife, Elizabeth.

•In early-1992, after winning his feud with Roberts, Savage was antagonized by Ric Flair, at the time the WWF World champion. Flair claimed to have dated Elizabeth before Savage did, enraging the "Macho Man." Savage beat Flair for the title at WrestleMania VIII.

•As champion, Savage took on challenges from every rulebreaker contender, including Flair, Shawn Michaels, and Irwin R. Schyster. In an impressive run of title defenses, Savage beat them all.

•In the summer of 1992, a swaggering pseudo-Latino named Razor Ramon entered the federation and immediately put up his *machismo* against Savage's macho.

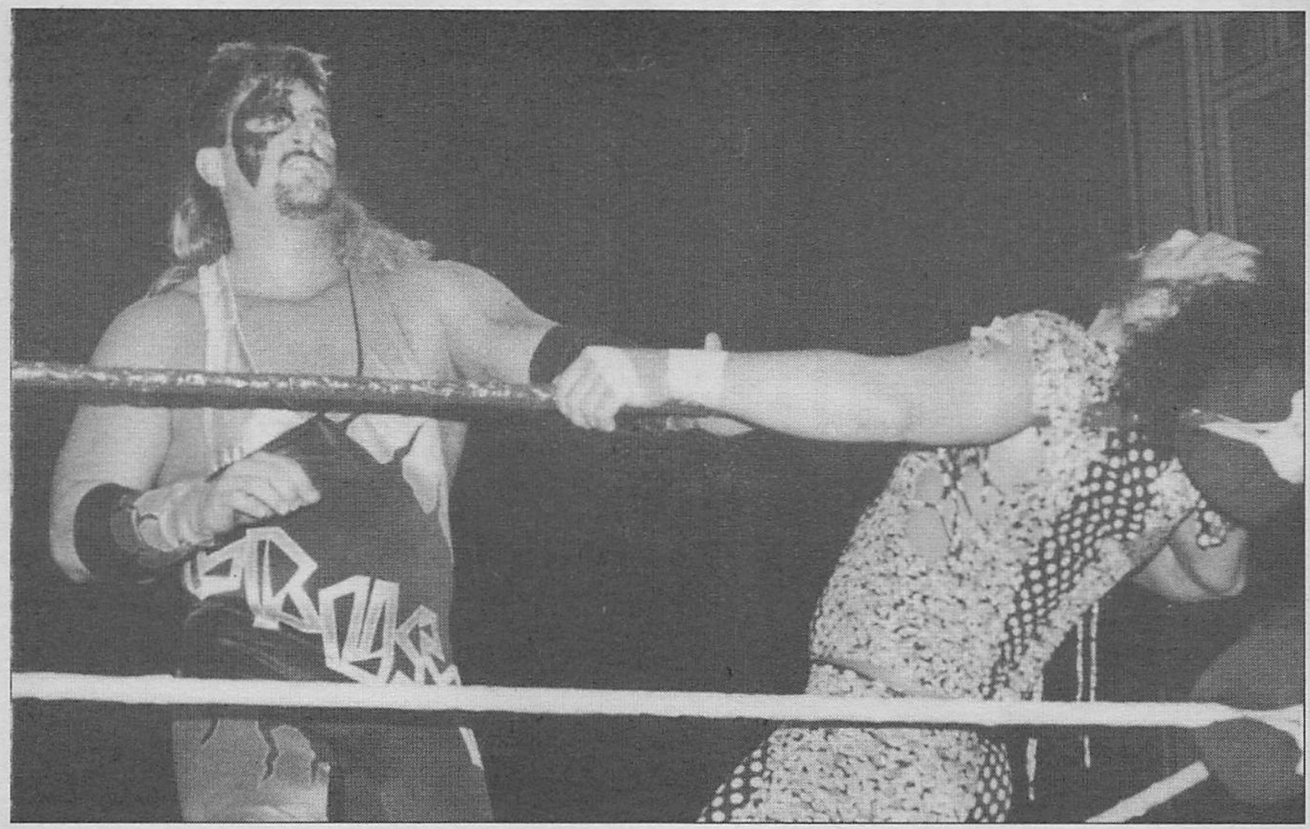
•A misunderstanding pitted Savage against The Ultimate Warrior, another competitor with a nickname allowing very little margin for error. The two battled to a double-disqualification at SummerSlam '92.

•After losing the title in 1992, Savage settled into the broadcaster's booth for telecasts of *WWF Monday Night Raw*. But his proximity to the ring—and to federation head Vince McMahon—kept him a target for wrestlers looking to make their mark.

Savage first came from behind the booth to dispense with Doink, who openly challenged him on national television. Next was Jerry Lawler, who reignited their long-dormant feud in both the WWF and the USWA. Then came Crush, who claimed Savage deliberately took too long to come to his aid when he was being pummeled by World champion Yokozuna. (Ironically, Crush later aligned himself with Yokozuna and manager Mr. Fuji.) He attacked Savage following an interview, touching off the feud that at press time was raging around the country.

"Randy just doesn't know how to say no," said Hacksaw Duggan. "He feels that he will be letting down his fans, his fellow wrestlers, and most of all himself if he doesn't meet every single challenge. Crush's accusations are ridiculous. Somewhere, Randy's going to have to draw the line."

Savage has drawn the line—and stepped over it. He was temporarily banned from his announcing duties by WWF President Jack



Savage normally takes on Crush without any allies on hand. That makes him perfect fodder for the Hawaiian rulebreaker, who frequently has World champion Yokozuna interfere on his behalf.

Tunney, leaving competition as his only option. In addition to handling Crush, he found the time and energy to score several pinfall victories over former Intercontinental champion Michaels on the recent WWF European tour.

But Savage may be in for more than he can handle. In a recent best-of-three-falls match against Crush in Canada, he was disqualified after the second pinfall following an attack by Yokozuna.

"That makes no difference to Savage," offered WWF expert Thomas Pilliard, who has analyzed and scrutinized the career of one of the WWF's all-time best competitors. "Savage won't be satisfied unless he beats Crush, regardless of who interferes on Crush's behalf. You saw what happened when he lost the title to Flair. He had every right to demand a rematch on the basis of the interference by Hennig and Ramon, but he didn't say a word. To Savage, that's what being the 'Macho Man' is all about. Shut up and wrestle."

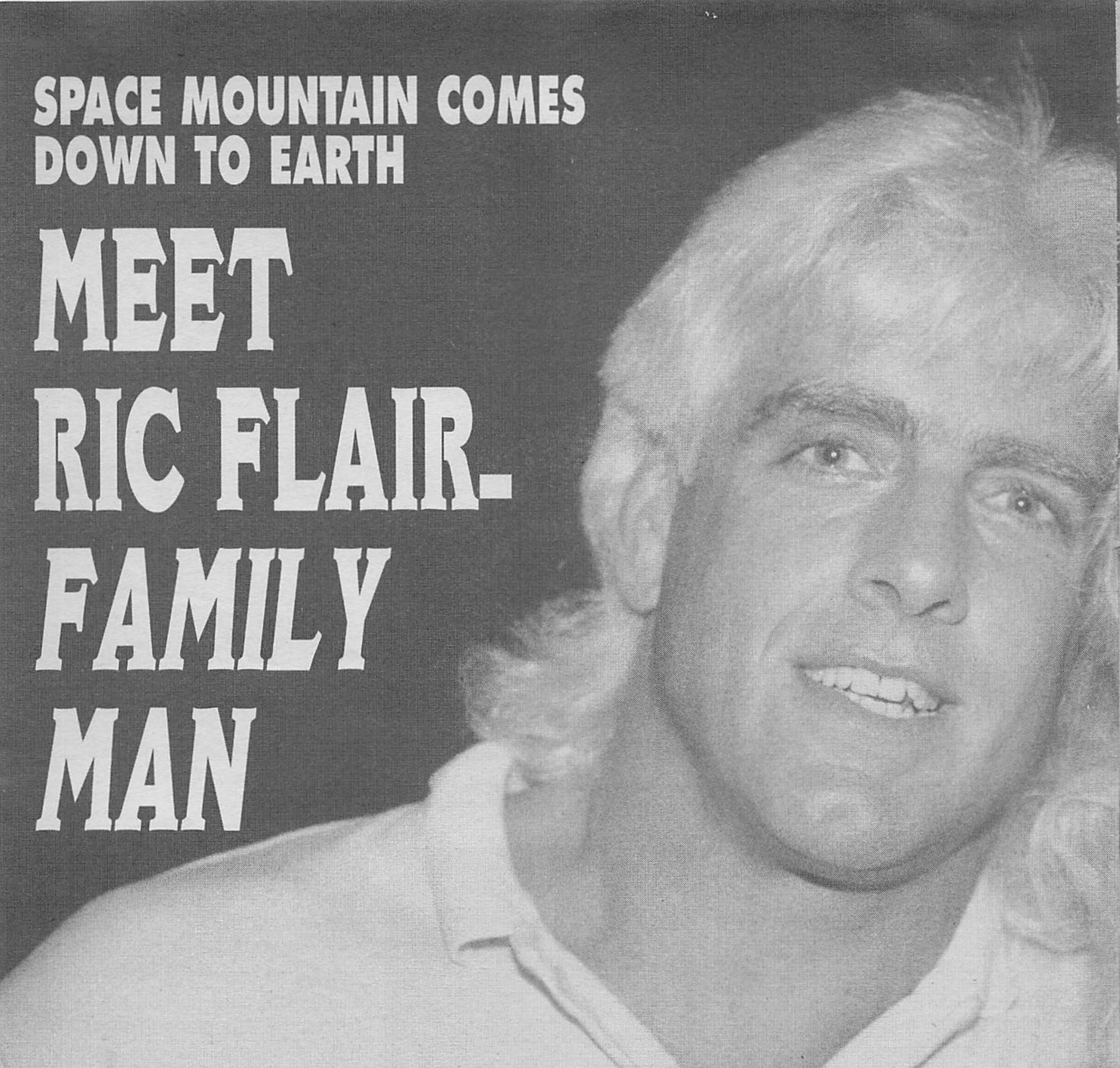
It might be best for Savage to return to the broadcast table. He was reinstated as an announcer by WWF President Jack Tunney, but probably will only serve part-time in that capacity now.

Although Savage believes otherwise, he has nothing left to prove to his fans and colleagues in the federation. His place in WWF history is secure. Savage certainly seems capable of handling Crush, as long as the bouts involve just the two main antagonists. But if Savage insists on waging the war despite the presence and interference of Yokozuna, he may find his macho turned to mush.

It is a classic Catch-22 for Savage. He totally understands the responsibilities that come with being the "Macho Man." There are never any days off. But as he gets on in years and younger wrestlers continue to challenge him, one wonders how long it will be before a wrestler like Crush gives Savage a permanent vacation. □

SPACE MOUNTAIN COMES DOWN TO EARTH

MEET RIC FLAIR— FAMILY MAN



By Chris Bernucca

HERE'S RIC FLAIR, on his way to the biggest—and perhaps last—match of his career. The limousine is waiting. The "Nature Boy" emerges from the house and stops at the front doorway to say goodbye to a female. Perhaps it is Fifi, his faithful maid, or one of the countless adoring groupies who have made a rendezvous with Flair their lifelong dream. There is a kiss, and as Flair walks toward the limousine, we see the woman is ...

His wife?

Here's Ric Flair, entering the limousine. Several splits of champagne and a collection of beauties surely await him in the spacious automobile. If this is going to be Flair's last match, he is going to go out his way—styling and profiling. The driver swings open the door to reveal the leggy ...

Gene Okerlund?

Here's Ric Flair, battling WCW World champion Big Van Vader at the Independence Arena in Charlotte, North Carolina. Flair lives for these moments. It is his opportunity to show the wrestling world what he's always preached—that to be

The big news isn't that Ric Flair added to his legend by winning another World title. No, the big news is that the venerable Flair is now less of a "Nature Boy" and more of a man about the house

The number-one woman in Ric Flair's life: wife Beth. The "Nature Boy" has been a family man for years, but he relied on their support more than ever before beating Big Van Vader for the WCW World title.

the man, you have to beat the man. Flair has always loved the spotlight, where he can display his greatness while thoroughly embarrassing his helpless opponent. From ringside seats, we can see that Flair is ...

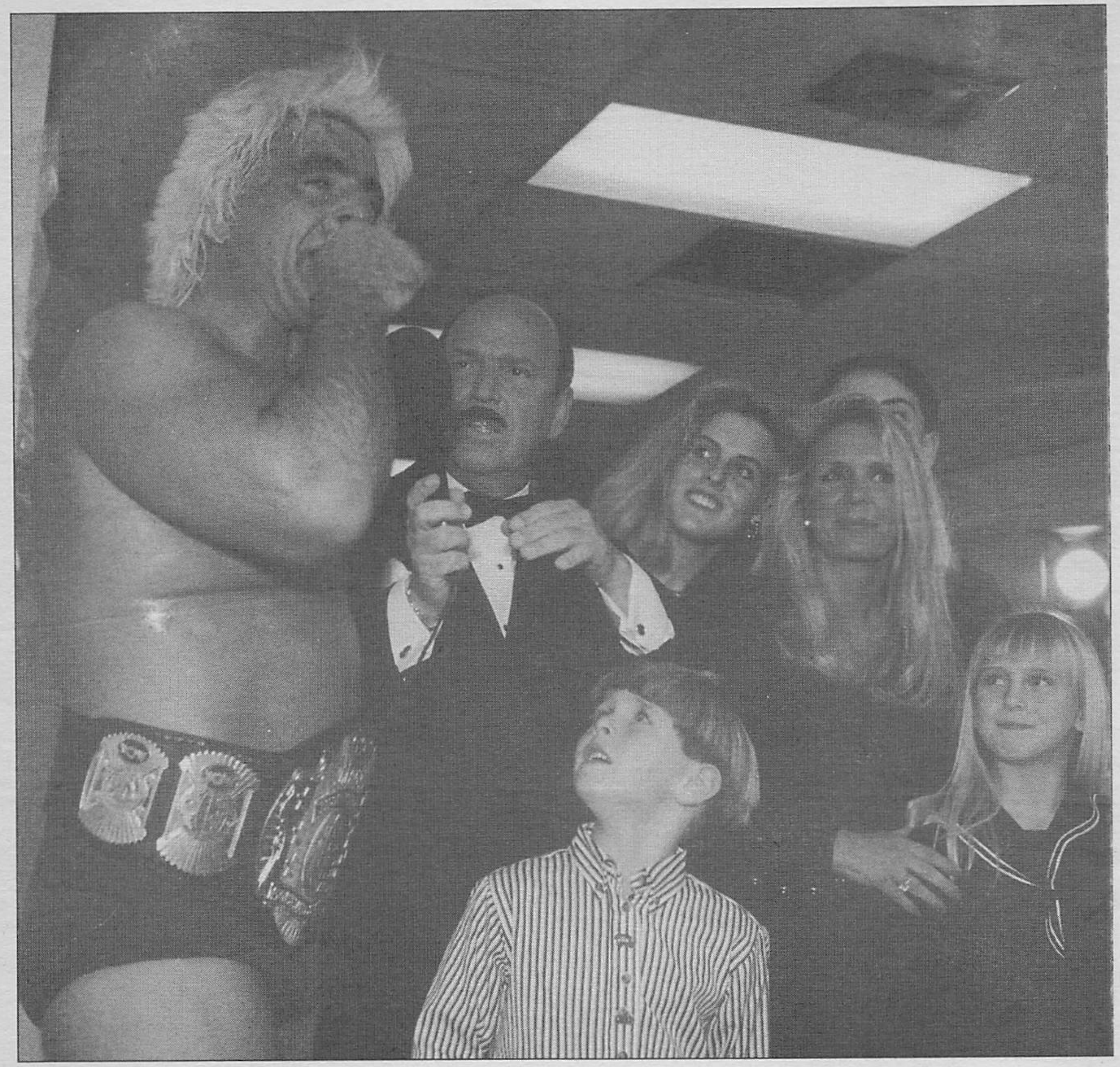
Thoroughly beaten and bloodied?

Here's Ric Flair, after upsetting Vader and pinning him to capture the WCW World title, the 10th world title of his illustrious career. It is yet another chance for the "Nature Boy" to gloat, to tell the wrestling world "I told you so." The bodacious Flair begins his victory speech, and the words can only be described as ...

Humble?

And here, finally, is Ric Flair, one hour after the card has ended. Now the celebration will begin. Now the limousine will be filled with shapely blondes, not balding announcers. Now the champagne will flow freely. Now the adjoining suites are being prepared for the all-night party. As Flair makes his way out of the arena, a reporter asks him where he is headed, and the new champion responds ...

Home?



The walls of Flair's locker room were covered with plastic to protect them from champagne in the event of a wild postmatch celebration. But Flair enjoyed the World title victory in a far more sedate manner, with the help of his family.

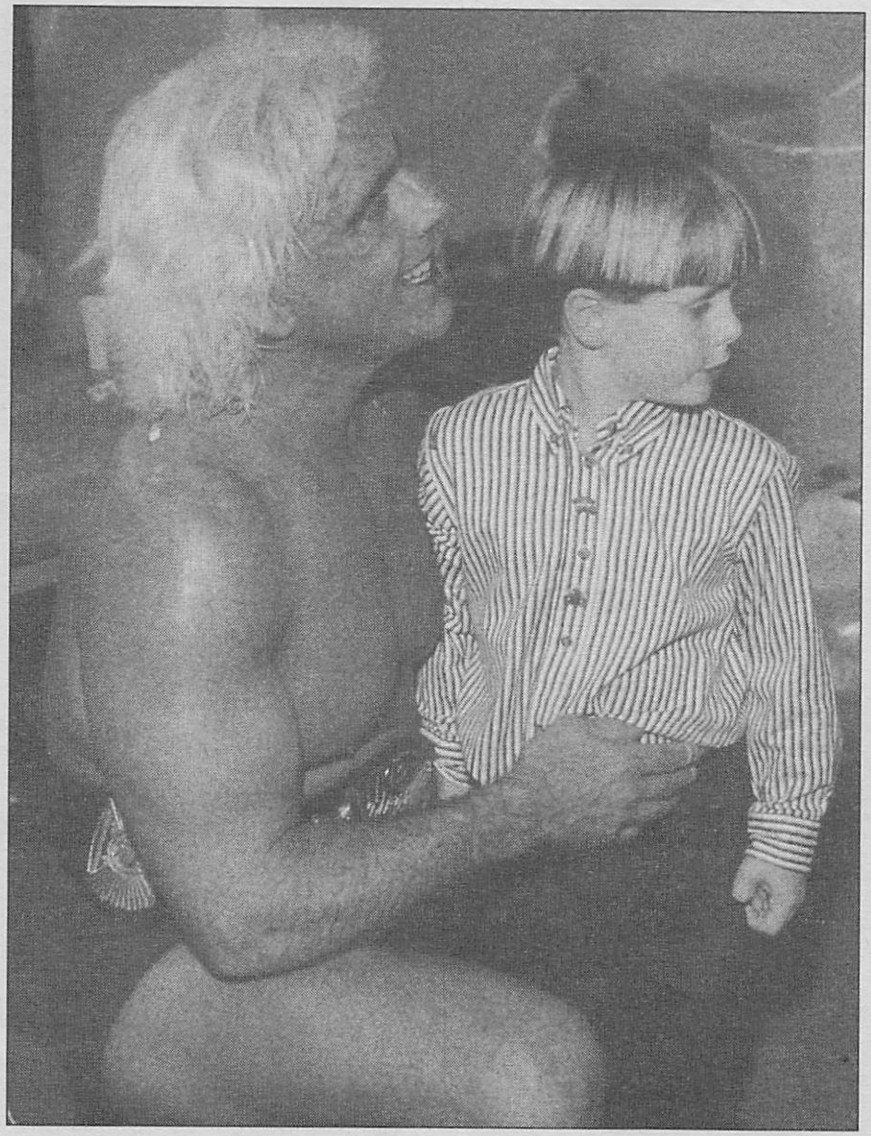
"I'm getting up there [in years]," Flair explains. "I can't stay out all night anymore. Got to get my rest. Got to take care of myself, and take care of this title."

Flair's personality change is even more dramatic than his victory over Vader. Had he lost, he would have been forced to retire, a stipulation he insisted upon for the match. No one gave him much of a chance against the 450-pound Vader, the human wrecking ball who claimed 1993 as his own in WCW. But, somehow, Flair won, affording him the opportunity to adopt his familiar persona that we all know and love (or hate).

Instead, Flair spent the entire evening showing us a side of himself that we did not know to exist. The scene at his house showed that he is a loving husband and father who values his family life. An interview with Okerlund revealed an introspection that has long been buried by braggadoccio. The match with Vader revealed that he is getting on in years and is becoming one of the sport's elder statesmen. And in victory, he displayed more humility than he had in the previous two decades.

Meet Ric Flair, a humble, respectful, thoughtful family man.

"You guys talk about these qual-



In the past, Flair has kept his family out of the spotlight, but this time he decided to let them partake of the glory. That's the "Nature Boy's" youngest boy, Reid, being held by his championship daddy.

Au revoir, Fifi? **The maid from France was nowhere to be seen at Starrcade. Perhaps Flair now believes that image he portrayed throughout most of his career is inconsistent with the life he really leads.**

ities like I've never had them before," laughed Flair a couple of days after his stunning defeat of Vader. "I've always been close to my family and I always think my matches through, both before and after. I plot out match strategy before the bout. After it's over, I'll go back over the match mentally in my head, wondering if there was anything I did wrong or could have done differently.

"But it's not every day you wrestle what you know could be your last match, and that got me to thinking a little more than usual. I would come back home from the gym and spend time with my family, which is something I haven't done enough of during my career. I'd look at my wife and kids and say to myself, 'You know, I could get used to this.' That made it easier to step into the ring against Vader, because I knew I had something to fall back on if my career were to end."

Flair, who usually has the support system of a manager, instead chose to rely on the foundation of his family. His wife and children were very supportive and let him know that, win or lose, he was still the same person.

"I couldn't have done it without them," Flair said. "One night, we were watching a Hornets game, and they lost. My kid, who is a big fan, usually gets upset when Charlotte loses. I asked him about it and he said, 'It's just a game.' That meant a lot to me."

Flair, who usually enters the ring without the thought of losing in his mind, approached this match differently.

"I knew I could lose," Flair admitted. "Heck, most people thought I would lose. Vader wasn't champion for a year by accident. But I knew I could win, too. There were certain things that had to happen—that I had to make happen—for me to win, and fortunately, I did. Even though I won, I got the hell beat out of me. But Vader's a great wrestler. He'll be back."

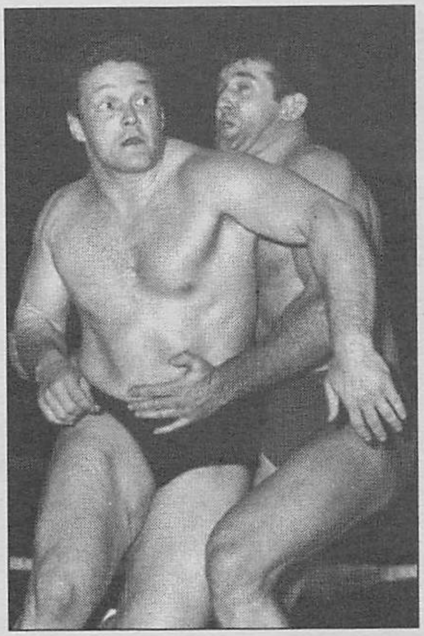
So will Ric Flair. As a family man. And as a champion—again.□

SCRAPBOOK

Explore with us the rich history of this great sport as we recall the important news stories at five-year intervals dating back a quarter of a century.

MARCH/APRIL 1969

A VIOLENT FEUD between The Sheik and Fred Blassie came to a head in a brutal bloodbath in Los Angeles' Olympic Auditorium. A sellout crowd rioted when The Sheik was declared winner and he would not interfere on behalf of his charge, Blackjack Lanza ... Gorilla Monsoon could not fulfill his promise to bodyslam 601-pound Haystacks Calhoun in a match in Boston ... Also in Boston, the largest crowd to that time to witness an indoors sporting event in the city (15,125) packed Boston Garden to see



In contrast to the bloodbath in L.A., Doug Gilbert and Reg Parks put on a magnificent display of scientific wrestling in Chicago. The bout ended as a 30-minute draw.

Bouts between Fred Blassie and The Sheik reached an ultra-violent climax in Los Angeles in 1969. The Sheik was declared winner in this best-of-three-falls match, retaining his Americas championship. An angered crowd rioted.

still champion in this best-of-three-falls match for the Americas championship ... Promoter Sam Muchnick lifted a St. Louis ban against managers coming to ringside after receiving a written promise from Bobby Heenan that Bruno Sammartino successfully defend his WWF title against The Sheik ... AWA stars Doug Gilbert and Reg Parks battled to a brilliant 30-minute scientific draw in Chicago ... Johnny Valentine defeated Dan Miller to win the Texas heavyweight championship. After the match, Valentine proclaimed he would win the NWA World championship in less than 18 months ... Newcomer Duke Savage was beginning to garner a lot of attention ... The Chain Gang—Jack and Frank Dillinger—was a new tag team that was doing bizarre things like pulling heavy chains around with safety pins fastened through their flesh, and entering the ring with live leeches stuck to their bodies!

NWA RATINGS: 1–Dory Funk Jr.; 2–Gene Kiniski; 3–Fritz Von Erich; 4–The Sheik; 5–Eddie Graham; 6–Bob Ellis; 7–Pat O'Connor; 8–Johnny Valentine;

9–Ernie Ladd; 10–Bob Geigel.

AWA RATINGS: 1–Verne Gagne; 2–Harley Race; 3–Crusher; 4–Bruiser; 5–Bill Watts; 6–Blackjack Lanza; 7–Mighty Igor; 8–Mad Dog Vachon; 9–Reg Parks; 10–Doug Gilbert.

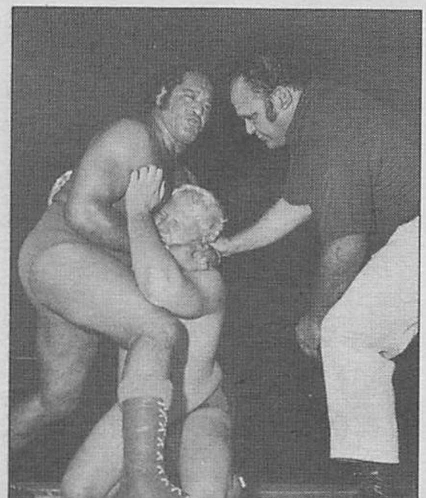
WWF RATINGS: 1–Bruno Sammartino; 2–Killer Kowalski; 3–Gorilla Monsoon; 4–Prof. Toru Tanaka; 5–Edouard Carpentier; 6–Miguel Perez; 7–George Steele; 8–Bull Ramos; 9–Spiros Arion; 10–Victor Rivera.

TAG TEAMS: 1–Bruiser & Crusher; 2–Pepper Gomez & Pedro Morales; 3–George Becker & Johnny Weaver; 4–Kenji Shibuya & Haru Sasaki; 5–Ole & Gene Anderson; 6–The Medics; 7–The Assassins; 8–Stan & Paul Vachon; 9–George & Sandy Scott; 10–Miguel Perez & Pete Sanchez.

MARCH/APRIL 1974

THE RELATIONSHIP between tag team partners Tim "Mr. Wrestling" Woods and Mr. Wrestling II exploded into a violent feud. Wrestling II defeated Woods in a hair vs. mask match in Atlanta. Woods received a standing ovation from the crowd as a barber shaved his head ... In a Los Angeles match, a fan threw a cup of beer into the bloody face of the Great Goliath. Goliath accused enemy Victor Rivera of the act ... Cyclone Negro traveled to Texas with hopes of collecting the $10,000 bounty J.J. Dillon had placed on Dick Murdoch. Negro failed to put his opponent out of wrestling and collect the bounty, but he did bloody Murdoch with a ringside chair ... Don Leo Jonathan brought the timekeeper's bell into the ring with him to use against Bruno Sammartino in Baltimore, but the WWF champ stole the bell away and clobbered Jonathan, who fell out of the ring and was counted out ... Both Lord Al Hays and Ernie Ladd unexpectedly broke their contracts with Bobby Heenan, then promptly vowed to destroy the manager ... Red Bastien and The Great Mephisto were trying to eliminate each other from the Texas wrestling scene.

Tim "Mr. Wrestling" Woods and Mr. Wrestling II were longtime tag team partners, but in 1974 they briefly feuded. In a mask vs. hair match in Atlanta, Wrestling II defeated Woods.



A $10,000 bounty was placed on Dick Murdoch's head by J.J. Dillon in 1974, and Cyclone Negro invaded Texas in a quest for the cash. While he couldn't put Murdoch out of wrestling, he bloodied his rival with a ringside chair.

NWA RATINGS: 1–Jack Brisco; 2–The Sheik; 3–Moondog Mayne; 4–John Tolos; 5–Harley Race; 6–Terry Funk; 7–Dory Funk Jr.; 8–Andre the Giant; 9–Abdullah the Butcher; 10–Tim Woods.

AWA RATINGS: 1–Verne Gagne; 2–Billy Graham; 3–Billy Robinson; 4–Wahoo McDaniel; 5–The Crusher; 6–Ivan Koloff; 7–Ray Stevens; 8–Nick Bockwinkel; 9–Baron Von Raschke; 10–Ken Patera.

WWF RATINGS: 1–Bruno Sammartino; 2–Pedro Morales; 3–Chief Jay Strongbow; 4–Killer Kowalski; 5–Nikolai Volkoff; 6–Stan Stasiak; 7–Don Leo Jonathan; 8–Larry Hennig; 9–Tony Garea; 10–Dean Ho.

TAG TEAMS: 1–Nick Bockwinkel & Ray Stevens; 2–Dean Ho & Tony Garea; 3–Karl & Kurt Von Hess; 4–The Fabulous Kangaroos; 5–Prof. Toru Tanaka & Mr. Fuji; 6–Goliath & Black Gordman; 7–The Valiant Brothers; 8–Bruiser & Cowboy Bob Ellis; 9–The Kiwi Sheepherders; 10–Stan Stasiak & Larry Hennig.

MARCH/APRIL 1979

JOHNNY AND JERRY Valiant, managed jointly by their brother Jimmy Valiant and by Capt. Lou Albano, defeated Larry Zbyszko and Tony Garea to win the WWF tag team championship ... Kevin Von Erich held the NWA World title for five minutes. The title was

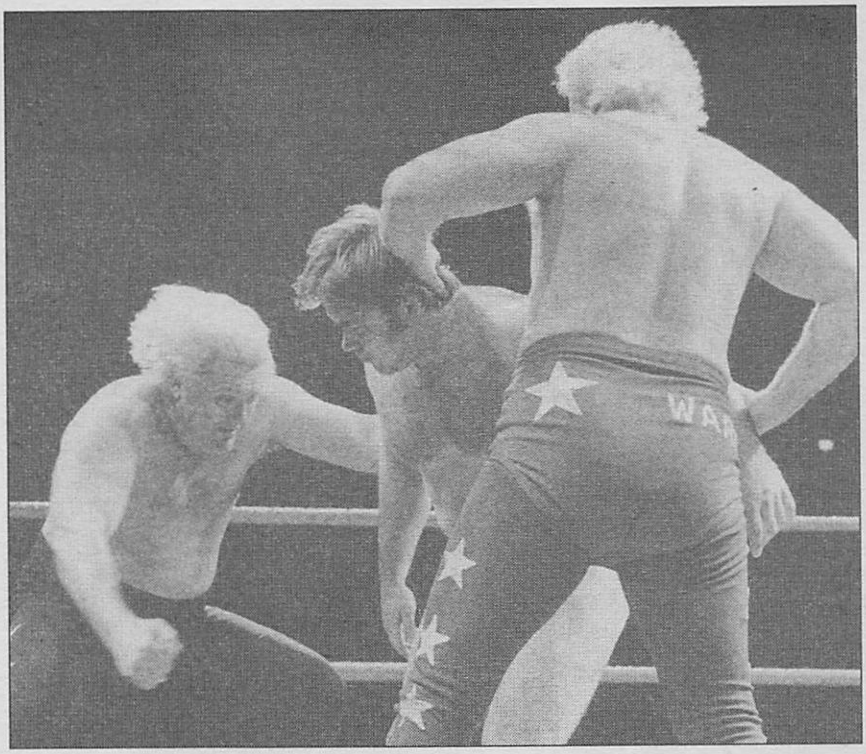
given back to Harley Race because a second referee, not contracted to officiate in the title match, had made the decision after the first referee was knocked out of the ring ... Chief Jay Strongbow recovered from a broken leg suffered in a match with Greg Valentine. Strongbow promised to break both of Valentine's legs in retaliation ... In Florida, the Tampa Sports Authority voted Eddie Graham "Citizen Of The Year" ... Bruno Sammartino was the subject of the *Greatest Sports Legends* TV series, hosted by baseball great Tom Seaver ... The Magnificent M was unmasked as Don Muraco. After the unmasking, Muraco said he would defeat Jim Garvin and take his Florida State title ... Garvin, by the way, was winning respect as a Florida champion who defended his belt every week on TV ... On March 17, Dick Murdoch defeated Dick the Bruiser to win the Missouri title ... Ernie Ladd was issuing some bold challenges to U.S. champion Rick Steamboat.

NWA RATINGS: 1–Harley Race; 2–Ric Flair; 3–Dusty Rhodes; 4–Rick Steamboat; 5–Mr. Wrestling II; 6–Ken Patera; 7–Masked Superstar; 8–Dick Murdoch; 9–Jim Garvin; 10–Kevin Von Erich.

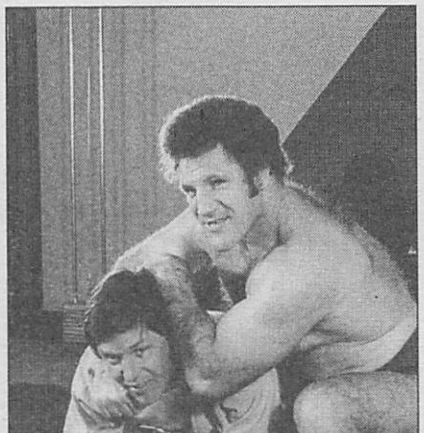
AWA RATINGS: 1–Nick Bockwinkel; 2–Jim Brunzell; 3–Billy Robinson; 4–Verne Gagne; 5–Greg Gagne; 6–Jerry Lawler; 7–Larry Hennig; 8–Ray Stevens; 9–Super Destroyer II; 10–Pat Patterson.

WWF RATINGS: 1–Bob Backlund; 2–Bulldog Brower; 3–Greg Valentine; 4–Peter Maivia; 5–Dusty Rhodes; 6–Ivan Putski; 7–Ivan Koloff; 8–Victor Rivera; 9–Steve Travis; 10–Fred Curry.

TAG TEAMS: 1–Johnny & Jerry Valiant; 2–Paul Orndorff & Jimmy Snuka; 3–Ray Stevens & Pat Patterson; 4–Ken Patera & John Studd; 5–Ole Anderson & Ivan Koloff; 6–Jos LeDuc & Thor the Viking; 7–Bob Roop & Bob Orton Jr.; 8–Larry Zbyszko & Tony Garea; 9–Kevin & David Von Erich; 10–Eddy Mansfield & Leroy Brown.



Talk about a Valiant effort! Johnny (Right) and Jerry Valiant surround Larry Zbyszko as they win the WWF tag team title from Zbyszko and Tony Garea in 1979. The winners were co-managed by Jimmy Valiant and Capt. Lou Albano.



Here are two athletes who know what it's like to have glorious moments in New York. One-time New York Met pitching ace Tom Seaver interviewed WWF great Bruno Sammartino for the TV series *Greatest Sports Legends*.

MARCH/APRIL 1984

AFTER STAN LANE and Steve Keirn had wrestled as The Fabulous Ones for two years, their manager, Jackie Fargo, split with the team and formed "Fargo's Fabulous Ones" with Tommy Rich and Eddie Gilbert. Soon afterward, Rich and Gilbert won the Mid-Southern tag team title ...

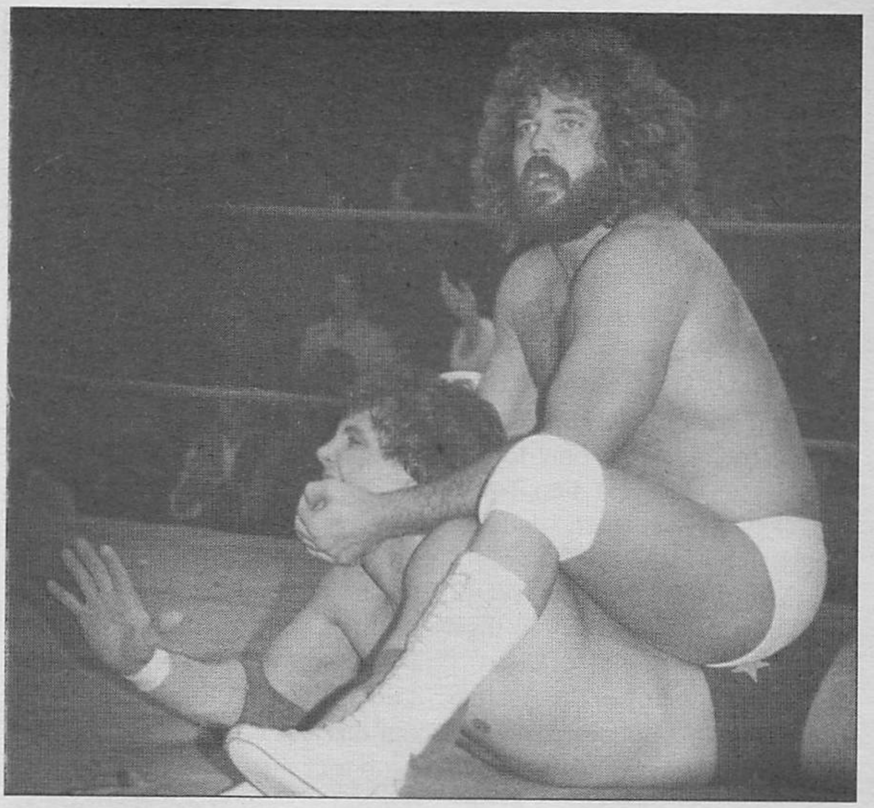
Years before managing Harley Race in the WWF, Bobby Heenan managed him for several matches in St. Louis ... On April 17 in Hamburg, Pennsylvania, Adrian Adonis and Dick Murdoch defeated Rocky Johnson and Tony Atlas to win the WWF tag team belts ... Jim Garvin beat Chris Adams for the World Class American title when his valet, Precious, sprayed perfume in Adams' eyes. Two weeks later, Adams regained the belt ... Bobby Eaton and Dennis Condrey captured the Mid—South tag title from Mr. Wrestling II and Magnum T.A. when Wrestling II left the ring, leaving Magnum to fight for himself. It was the beginning of a bitter dispute between Magnum and his old mentor ... Jack and Jerry Brisco captured the NWA World tag title from Wahoo McDaniel and Mark Youngblood on April 4 in Spartanburg, South Carolina. McDaniel and Youngblood regained the title in Richmond, Virginia, on April 27 ... Rick Steamboat captured the U.S. title from Dick Slater on April 21 in Greensboro, North Carolina ... Barry Windham and Mike Rotundo lost the U.S. tag team belts to Black Bart and Ron Bass on April 25.

NWA RATINGS: 1–Ric Flair; 2–Rick Steamboat; 3–The Spoiler; 4–Harley Race; 5–Ron Bass; 6–Angelo Mosca Jr.; 7–Carlos Colon; 8–Billy Jack; 9–Chris Adams; 10–Kerry Von Erich.

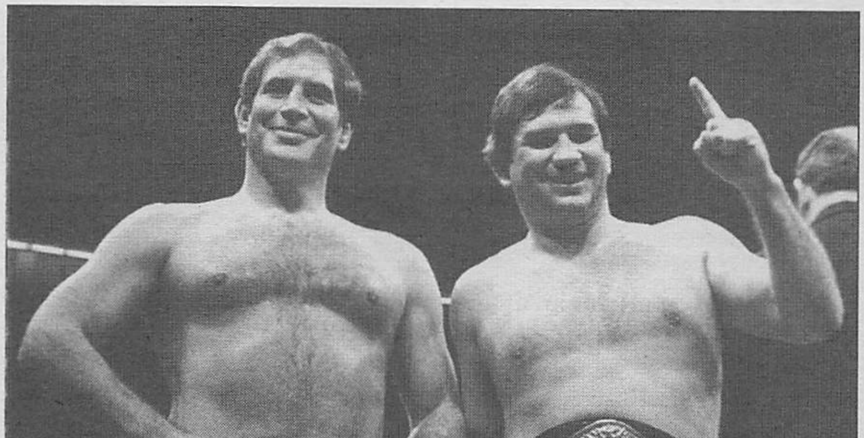
WWF RATINGS: 1–Hulk Hogan; 2–Greg Valentine; 3–Tito Santana; 4–Bob Backlund; 5–Sgt. Slaughter; 6–David Shultz; 7–Paul Orndorff; 8–The Iron Sheik; 9–Jimmy Snuka; 10–Roddy Piper.

AWA RATINGS: 1–Jumbo

(Continued on page 59)



Jim Garvin won the World Class American title from Chris Adams in 1984, thanks in part to valet Precious. She sprayed perfume in the eyes of "Gentleman Chris." He recaptured the belt two weeks later.



Oh, brother! Jack and Jerry Brisco celebrate in 1984 after they defeated Wahoo McDaniel and Mark Youngblood for the NWA World tag team title. Their reign lasted all of 23 days, as McDaniel and Youngblood took the belts back.

YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 5)

where he can settle into one role week after week. For his sake, I hope he does.

NATHAN HENRICH
Signal Hill, CA

TAG R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Well, Marcus Alexander Bagwell and 2 Cold Scorpio finally earned respect—but only for 20 days ("The Greatest Tag Team That No One Respected," January 1994). I'm a fan of The Nasty Boys, and I'm glad the WCW World tag belts are back in their possession.

But while I may not like Scorpio and Bagwell, I honestly respect them. For fan favorites, they have plenty of genuine athletic ability, and it shows in the ring. Had the Nastys not returned to WCW, they would currently be my favorite tag team.

I and many other WCW fans look forward to seeing the Nastys battle Scorpio and Bagwell for years to come. Enjoy the rivalry!

JENNY BRYANT
Shenandoah, IA

BORED BY BORGA

I'm sorry that I just can't get excited about Ludvig Borga ("Wanted: A Man To 'Finnish' Off Ludvig Borga," February 1994), but the last I saw, Finland posed no direct threat to the American way of life. I live not far from Sunset Park in Brooklyn, a major Finnish and Scandinavian enclave, and the natives there are thoroughly embarrassed by Borga's boorishness.

If they had their way, they'd ship him back across the sea and let him do his wrestling on the European circuit.

As a wrestler, Borga is very powerful and very talented, but those types are at least a dime a dozen in the WWF. Someone was bound to finally end Native American Tatanka's unbeaten ways in the federation.

DOM DiSALVO
Brooklyn, NY ☐

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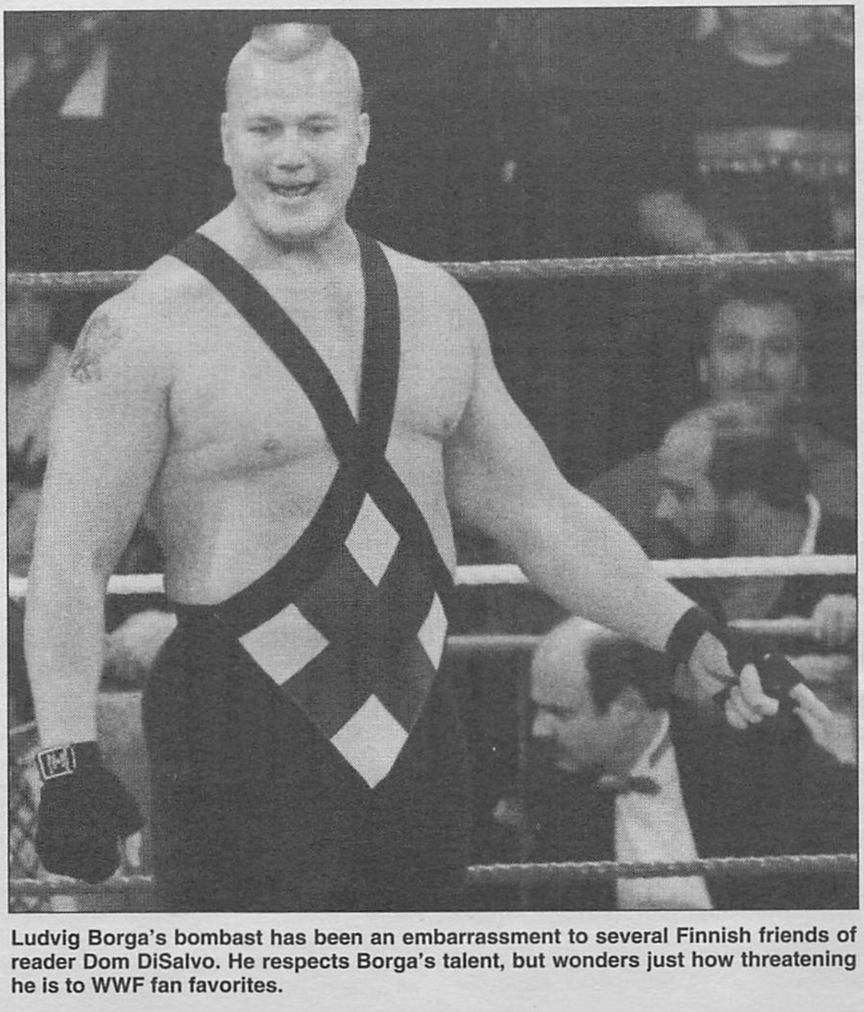
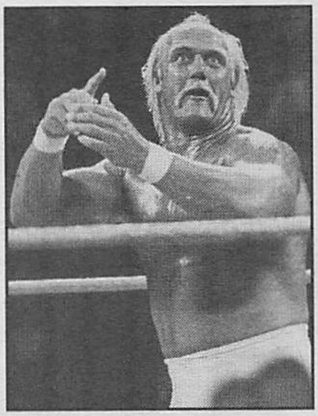


Ludvig Borga's bombast has been an embarrassment to several Finnish friends of reader Dom DiSalvo. He respects Borga's talent, but wonders just how threatening he is to WWF fan favorites.

THIS MONTH IN...

Wrestle America



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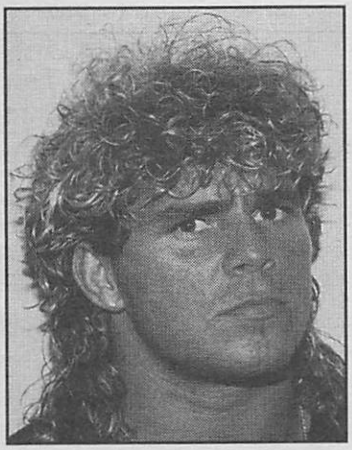


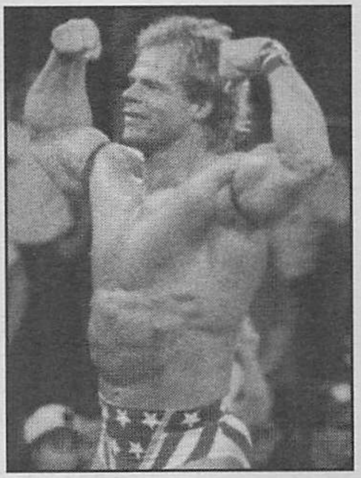
Why **BRIAN PILLMAN** will never be accepted again

PLUS ...
RIC FLAIR asks **HARLEY RACE**: "What are *you* doing in the ring, old man? ... Could **OWEN** actually be better than **BRET HART**? ... It's time **LEX LUGER** and **TATANKA** formed a team ... Why the USWA doesn't have championship stability ... Exciting action photographs from top WWF and WCW cards

All this—and much more!—in the Spring 1994 issue of ***Wrestle America***

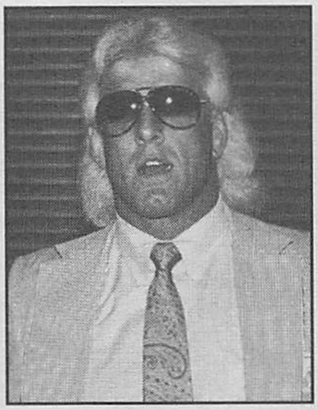
NOW ON SALE!

Inside Wrestling



Special Issue! The *Inside Wrestling* Computer Tournament '94

Why **LEX LUGER'S** WWF career has stalled



RIC FLAIR discusses his World title victory in "Hotseat"

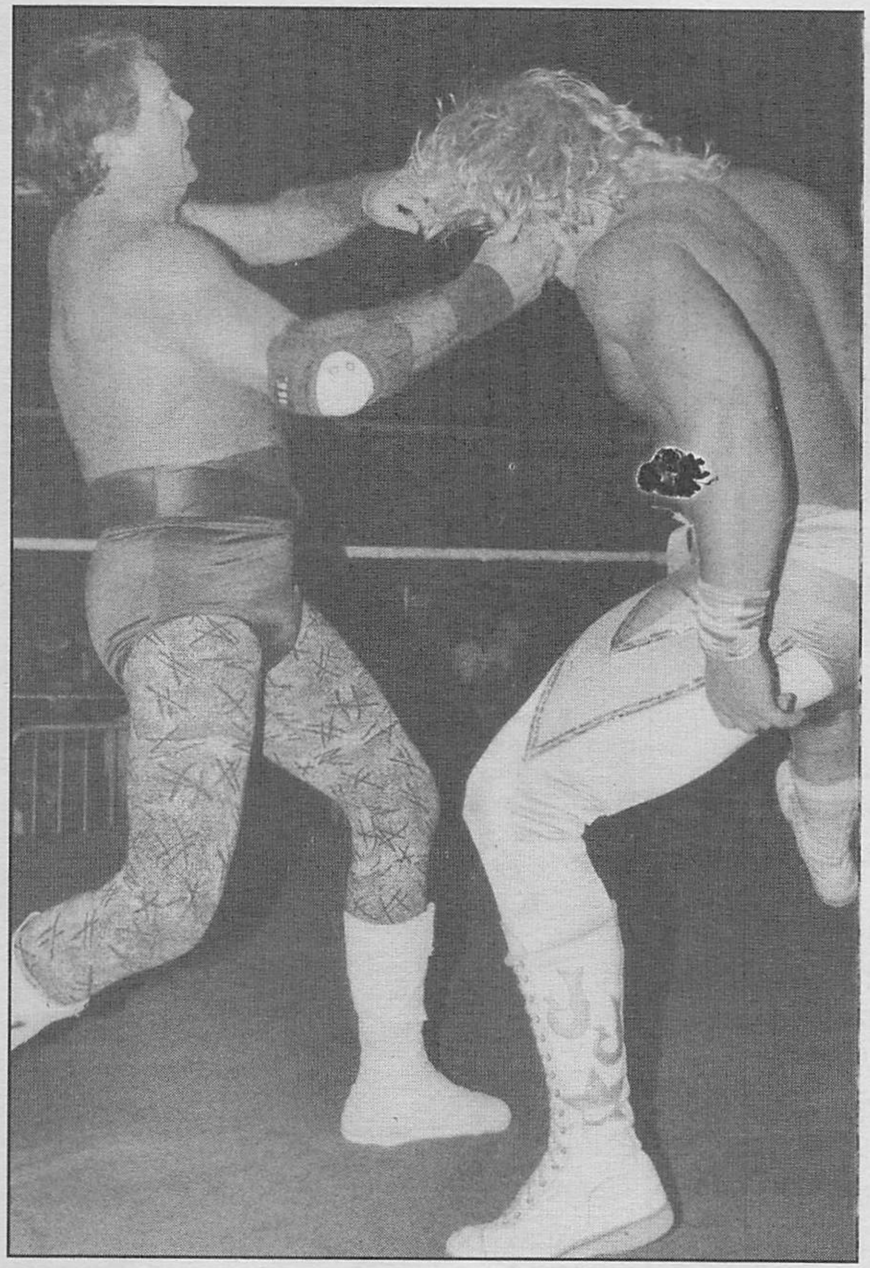
PLUS ...
YOKOZUNA wants to quit, but **MR. FUJI** says no! ... **STARRCADE** stuns again! A decade-long tradition of excellence continues ... How **CURT HENNIG** can regain perfection ... **TERRY FUNK** vs. **SABU**: "Heh-heh ... now that's cool!" ... One on one: **STING** vs. **RON SIMMONS**

All this—and much more!—in the April 1994 issue of ***Inside Wrestling***

NOW ON SALE!

WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from page 7)



Often allies, sometimes rivals, Jerry Lawler and Jeff Jarrett battle for the USWA title. Lawler took the title from Jarrett, who is now competing on WWF cards.

in a few matches against **The Kid**, though on occasion he likes to keep his feet on the ropes for extra leverage during pinfalls.

An interesting thing happened in Canton, Ohio, involving Jarrett. **"Brooklyn Brawler" Steve Lombardi** was slated to face **Marty Jannetty**. Before the bout, Lombardi invited "Double J" to come to the ring and sing a song. Jarrett obliged, only to hear Jannetty's theme music come on before he could utter a note. When Jarrett and Lombardi tried to double-team Jannetty, he cleared the ring. Jarrett says he wants revenge.

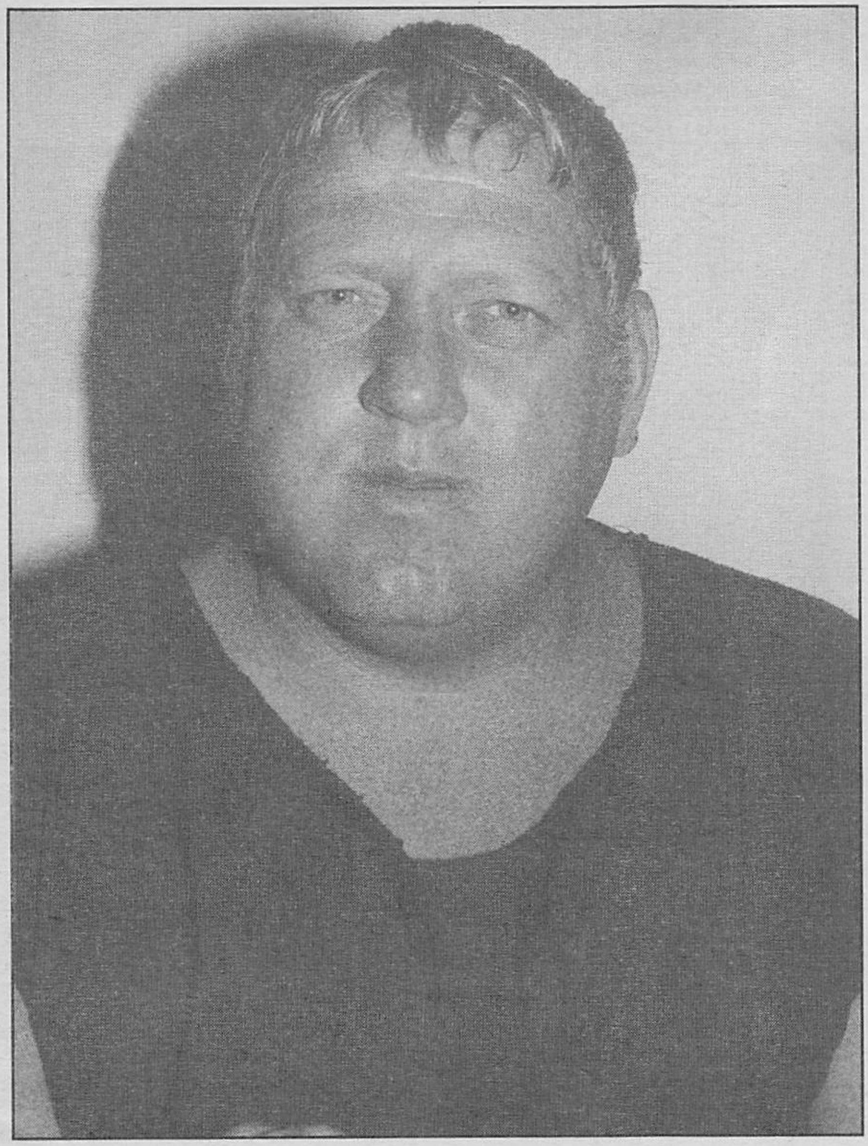
Jerry Lawler got his revenge against Jarrett, who recently turned rulebreaker in the USWA as well. "The King" pinned him for the USWA belt after Jarrett mistakenly thought *he* had scored a pin with his feet on the ropes.

Brian Christopher is doing well since becoming a fan favorite in Memphis. At press time, he was Southern champ, but narrowly averted disaster at a card at the Mid-South Coliseum. Smoky Mountain invader **Killer Kyle** eliminated Christopher (with the help of **Buddy Landell**) to win a $5,000 battle royal. After the event, Landell and Kyle jumped Christopher. Later, Lawler and **Doug** and **Eddie Gilbert** joined the fray. The Gilberts nearly smothered Christopher with a plastic bag!

The action has been just as brutal in another part of Tennessee: Smoky Mountain territory. **Brian Lee** is proving to be a resilient SMW champ.

He held off the challenge of **Tracey Smothers** in the fall of last year and has held his own against **"Dirty White Boy" Tony Anthony**. Lee even used the help of manager **Tammy Fytch** and the interfering **Chris Candido** to beat *both* foes in several "Triple Threat" matches. A Candido-Smothers feud seems to be on the horizon. Candido got stuck in some odd specialty matches in 1993, but he is very talented.

The big SMW news, however, is that old rivals Smothers and Anthony have called a truce. After one of the "Triple Threat" matches, Lee and Fytch attacked **"Dirty White Girl" Kimberly**. Smothers came to her aid; he and Anthony eventually chased Lee and Fytch to the locker room.



Dick Murdoch's victory over The Bullet on Christmas night enabled Jim Cornette to retain his hair. However, Bullet wore a mask under his mask so as not to reveal his identity in this stipulation match.

It took a while, but Smothers cautiously shook "White Boy's" hand.

"I wasn't sure about 'White Boy' for a while, but I guess he has become a new man," Smothers told me. "We made our peace. I'm very happy about that."

Jim Cornette is just happy he's not bald. He brought in veteran **Dick Murdoch** to get rid of the masked **Bullet** (Cornette believes Bullet is former SMW Commissioner **Bob Armstrong**). The manager was suckered into putting his hair on the line against Bullet's mask in Knoxville. Murdoch won and Bullet took off his mask to reveal ... yet another mask! The joke's on you, Jimbo.

A lot of people think ECW star **Sabu** has a bright future in our sport. I agree. Let's not put **Terry Funk** in the past, however. Funk shocked the maniac from Bombay, India, in Philadelphia, winning the ECW heavyweight title from him. Pushing age 50 and still going strong!

That's what's happening. See you at the matches! □

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NO HOLDS BARRED

(Continued from page 8)

and his family have meant to him.

Ric Flair, right before our very eyes, is becoming the man we thought he once detested. Ric Flair *is* becoming Rick Steamboat.

Now go backward about five years. Flair and Steamboat are battling in a memorable feud. Flair is the villain, Steamboat the goody-two-shoes fan favorite. He brings wife Bonnie and son Rick Jr., of course, to the ring for each match. They are the loving family. They are in this war together.

Flair hates this. The Steamboat family goes against his grain. Or against his image. Family and wrestling just don't mix, according to Slick Ric.

Who knew how slick!

At Starrcade '93, Flair did a complete about-face on his entire career. His entire persona was flushed down the toilet, as if the past decade didn't mean a thing. If part of the person we saw is an illusion, how about the rest of him?

For years, Flair has criticized Rick Steamboat for using his wife and child to foster his family image. Has Ric become the world champion of hypocrisy?

Listen, I'm going to come clean about a few things, even if Flair won't. First of all, I knew Flair had a wife and children. So does almost every wrestling journalist and wrestler in the U.S. But for years, Flair asked us to not mention his family in print. He didn't want them involved in his wars. Most of all, he didn't want them becoming a target for enemy wrestlers.

And Flair had this image to uphold. He had to be the man. The jet-setter, the perfect bachelor. It was a beautiful illusion.

You see, Flair made us believe that his family wasn't an important part of his wrestling life. I honestly thought Flair and his wife were at odds. I never saw him cheat on Beth. Nor do I have any reason to believe he did. And I fully believe wrestlers have every right to create a persona for themselves. It's part of the sport.

But how can Flair singlehandedly destroy that persona for his own good and make believe the past 10 years didn't happen?

Flair was terribly angry at Steamboat for turning their feud into a Bad Guy vs. Family thing. Now here he was doing the same thing to Vader. And to us!

I just don't know what I've been watching all these years. Bill Apter, who loves Jerry Lewis Labor Day telethons and found *Ghost* perfectly plausible, sees no inconsistency in Flair's actions. He is the unapologetic defender of the wrestling icon.

Perhaps I should have greater faith, too, but, unlike Bill, I'm a journalist. I'm paid to be a cynic.

You know who I feel sorry for? Beth. I wonder how she feels about being used. All those years when she sat home while her man was on the road, I wonder if she thought his act was all an act. You know, Fifi and Flair looked pretty natural together. I interviewed them on the eve of Starrcade and saw love in their eyes.

Hey, maybe I'm just a troublemaker. Flair has all these beautiful women at his feet, but he's perfectly loyal, right?

Sure. But only if he really became Rick Steamboat. Boy, I hope he didn't. □

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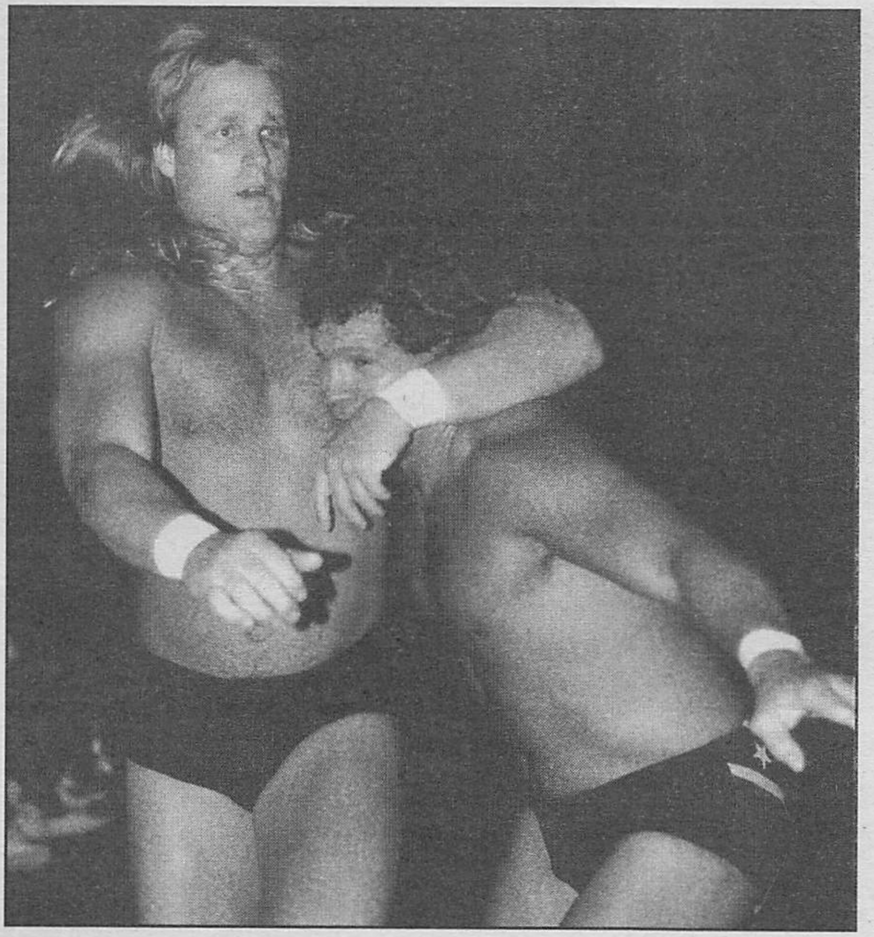

While Brian Lee defeated Tracey Smothers, the Smoky Mountain heavyweight champion still wasn't through for the night. He pinned Tony Anthony to close out the "Triple Threat" match and retain the title.

The Undertaker beat WWF World champion Yokozuna by disqualification.

Johnson City, TN *(Correspondent—Timothy A. Walker):* The Smoky Mountain title was on the line in a strange match. Tony Anthony, Tracey Smothers, and champ Brian Lee squared off in a "Triple Threat" bout, meaning there were no disqualifications or countouts; wrestlers could only be eliminated by pinfall or submission, with the last man remaining becoming SMW champ.

Smothers immediately attacked Lee, but was thwarted when the champ tossed him out of the ring and manager Tammy Fytch belted him with her loaded purse. Meanwhile, Lee and "Dirty White Boy" were battling each other inside the ring. Fytch then attacked "Dirty White Girl" Kimberly on the arena floor. As Anthony tried to separate them, Lee got Fytch's purse and blasted him with it.

That allowed Smothers to go after Lee, but Chris Candido came to ringside and smashed Smothers' head into a railing. Seconds later, Lee pinned Tracey.

That left Lee and Anthony. Lee scored a near fall after a powerslam, but Anthony came back. Fytch came to Lee's rescue by squirting hair spray in Anthony's eyes. Lee got the pin to retain the title. Aterward, Lee and Fytch double-teamed Kimberly. That brought Smothers back to the ring. He and Anthony eventually chased Lee and Fytch away. The two men effectively ended their longtime feud by shaking hands.

In other bouts: Tag team champs The Heavenly Bodies beat Mike & Doug Furnas ... The Bullet pinned Dick Murdoch ... The Moondogs beat The Bruise Brothers ... Prince Kharis defeated Bobby Blaze by TKO ... Chris Candido beat Brian Armstrong.

Memphis, TN *(Correspondent—Jim Reid):* Money and pride were on the line when the USWA held a 15-man, two-ring battle royal at the Mid-South Coliseum. Action was fast and furious and after a few minutes, wrestlers were flying out of the ring left and right. Even favorite Jerry Lawler was eliminated.

At the end of the match, it came down to Southern champion Brian Christopher and Killer Kyle. Christopher, who recently won over USWA fans by turning fan favorite, seemed to have the advantage. Then Kyle knocked him down near the ropes and went for the pin. Buddy Landell held Christopher's legs as referee Frank Morell counted the pin. After Morell awarded Kyle the money, a brawl among Kyle, Christopher, Lawler, and Doug and Eddie Gilbert ensued in which the Gilberts nearly smothered Christopher with a plastic bag.

In other bouts: Reggie B. Fine beat Del Rios ... Jeff Gaylord defeated Vampire Warrior by disqualification ... Killer Kyle beat Ken Wayne ... Southern champ Brian Christopher beat Buddy Landell by disqualification ... Tag team champions Far Two Wild beat PG-13 ... Doug & Eddie Gilbert beat Jerry Lawler & Brian Christopher by disqualification. □

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June 1986/Stories include: Lugar, Hernandez, Flair-Bockwinkel, Hogan, T.A.
July 1986/Stories include: King Kong Bundy, Koloff vs. Graham, Ric Flair.
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December 1986/Stories include: Flair, Bockwinkel, Hogan, Gilbert, Nikita.
January 1987/Stories include: Heenan, Garvins, DiBiase, Borne & Sawyer.
February 1987/Stories include: Magnum T.A., Gordy, Steamboat-Roberts.
March 1987/Stories include: Windham, Nikita, Adias, Savage-Steamboat.
April 1987/Stories include: Hogan, Luger, Rich-Lawler, R&R Express.
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March 1988/Stories include: Hogan, Luger-Sting, Calgary, Demolition.
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December 1989/Stories include: Muta-Sting, Andre-Ultimate, Windham.
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March 1990/Stories include: Steiners, Flair-Funk, Hogan-Zeus, Survivors.
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August 1990/Stories include: Hogan-Warrior, Embry, Demolition, Doom.
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November 1990/Stories include: Luger & Sting, Beefcake, Race, Steiners.
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July 1993/Stories include: Davey Boy-Vader, Ramon, Rhodes, Tatanka, Bravo murder.
August 1993/Stories include: Hogan-Yokozuna, Jarrett, Vicious, Hart, Payne.
September 1993/Stories include: Ramon, Steiners, Simmons, Hart, Sting & Davey Boy.
October 1993/Stories include: SummerSlam lists, Vader & Vicious, Nanny Simpson, Owen Hart-Lawler.
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YOU ASKED US

(Continued from page 16)

Q: "This question is for Senior Editor Bill Apter: Why doesn't Tatanka pursue the Intercontinental title instead of getting involved in the Lex Luger-Ludvig Borga feud? That's not doing him any good."—Molly Corey, Claremont, NH

A: **"There's an unwritten rule in the WWF that fan favorites don't go after fan favorites' titles, and the same thing applies to rulebreakers," Apter answered. "Since you're obviously an avid Tatanka fan, Molly, remember that Borga handed him his first loss in the federation, and he needed to avenge not only that, but the horrible beating Borga gave him en route. And it happened not far from you, in Worcester, Massachusetts! If Shawn Michaels, Diesel, Irwin R. Schyster, or some other rulebreaker wins the I-C belt from Razor Ramon, I wouldn't be surprised if Tatanka goes in that direction. Then it would make a lot of sense. Don't worry about Tatanka's chances for a title belt. He's young. He's got plenty of time."**

***

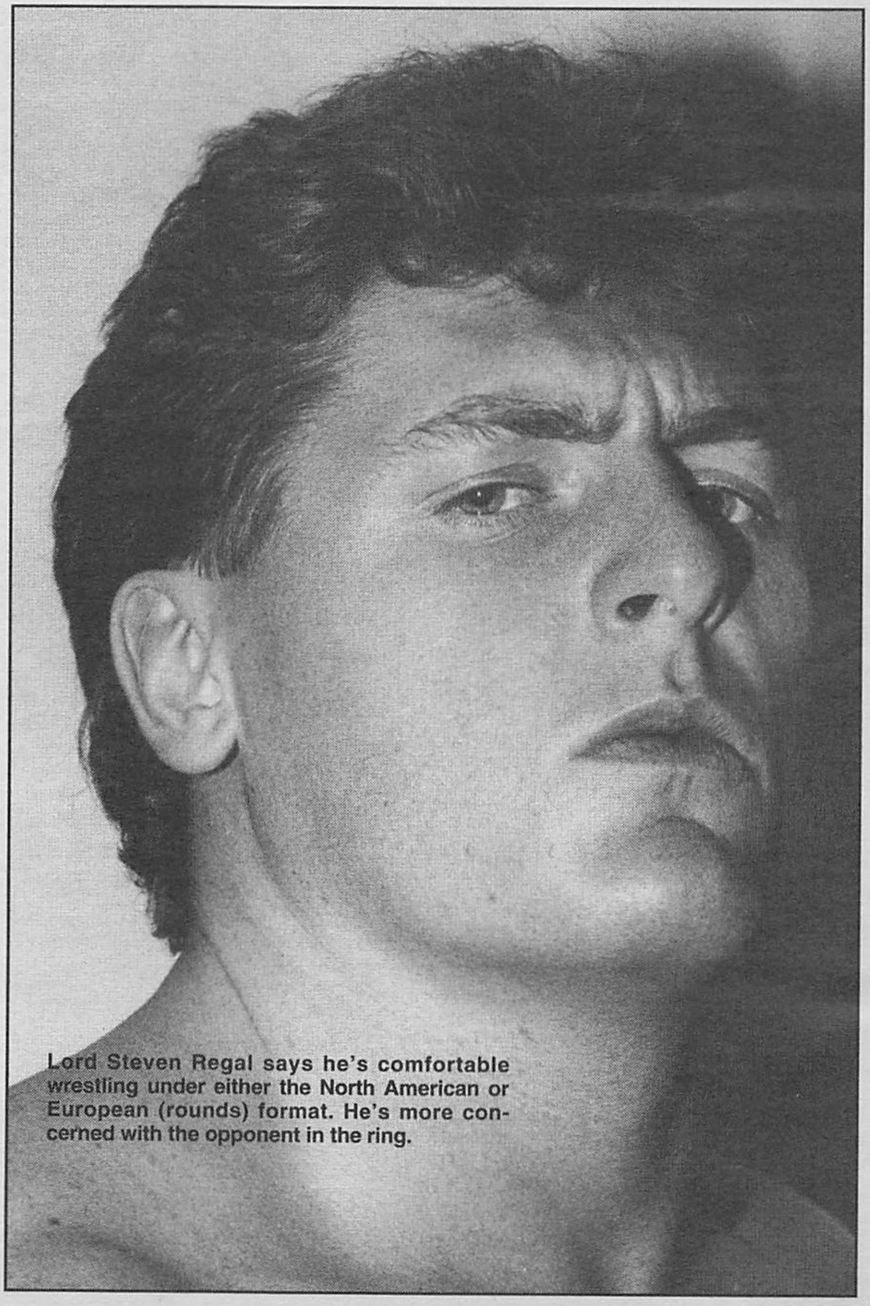
Q: "This question is for Lord Steven Regal: Do you prefer the European or North American format of wrestling?"—David Libertini, Takoma Park, MD

A: **"For the benefit of your fellow unsophisticated American fans, David, let's explain that European federations wrestle in rounds, as in boxing," Regal said. "Wrestling by rounds is fine, although it puts me at a disadvantage because my opponents, who normally don't have my stamina, are able to catch their breath for a minute or so. However, I'm just as comfortable with the continuous style employed here; in fact, it's one of the few things on this continent of yahoos that I *am* comfortable with. But for someone with my extensive international experience, it really doesn't matter. The opponent, not the format, is my primary concern."**

***

Q: "This question is for Miss Texas: Now that the WWF has revived its Women's title, do you plan to go after it?"—Julian Dennehy, Guthrie Center, IA

A: **"If they ask me, Julian, I will, of course," she replied. "I know I'm as good a wrestler as *Alundra Blayze?* She's never wrestled men regularly—sorry, I don't consider Paul E. Dangerously a real opponent. I did! She's never been ranked in the *"PWI 500."* I have! The USWA has had a good relationship with the WWF, so I'm sure they'll let me go after Alundra's title—whether she likes it or not!"** □



Lord Steven Regal says he's comfortable wrestling under either the North American or European (rounds) format. He's more concerned with the opponent in the ring.

Scrapbook

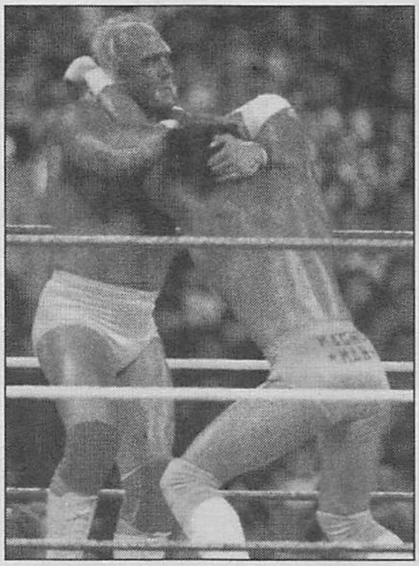
(Continued from page 49)

Tsuruta; 2–Rick Martel; 3–Blackjack Mulligan; 4–Nick Bockwinkel; 5–Blackjack Lanza; 6–Jerry Lawler; 7–Larry Zbyszko; 8–Brad Rheingans; 9–Greg Gagne; 10–Mr. Saito.

TAG TEAMS: 1–Jack & Jerry Brisco; 2–Ken Patera & Crusher Blackwell; 3–The Road Warriors; 4–The Midnight Express; 5–Dick Murdoch & Adrian Adonis; 6–Super Destroyers I & II; 7–Barry Windham & Mike Rotundo; 8–Tommy Rich & Eddie Gilbert; 9–King Tonga & El Gran Apollo; 10–Pierre Lefebvre & Frenchy Martin.

MARCH/APRIL 1989

HULK HOGAN WON his second WWF World title, at WrestleMania V in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on April 2, defeating Randy Savage ... Rick Rude also won the Intercontinental title from The Ultimate Warrior at WrestleMania ... The Olympians, Ken Patera and Brad Rheingans, beat Paul Diamond and Pat Tanaka for the AWA World tag team title on March 25 in Rochester, Minnesota ... Jeff Jarrett and Kerry Von Erich won the World Class tag team title on March 12 in Dallas, dethroning Robert Fuller and Jimmy Golden ... Varsity Club members Mike Rotundo and Steve Williams defeated The Road Warriors for the NWA World tag title on April 2; they were stripped a month later after attacking special referee Nikita Koloff ... Despite interference from Harley Race, Davey Boy Smith won the Stampede

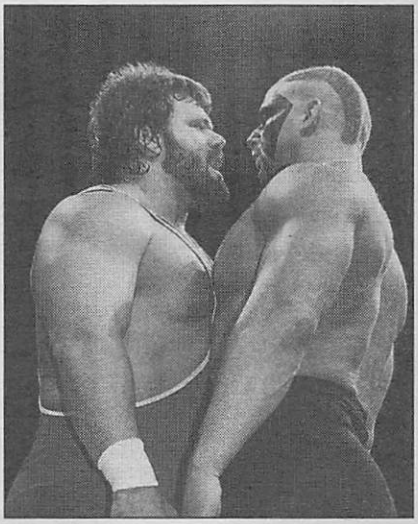


Hulk Hogan returned to the top of the WWF in 1989, defeating Randy Savage at WrestleMania V to regain the World title. Hogan had been without the belt since February 1988.

North American title from Don Muraco on March 24 in Calgary, Alberta ... Bob Backlund spoke to NWA officials about arranging a match against The Iron Sheik, who beat him for the WWF World title five years earlier ... Joe Blanchard, Tully's father, took over as AWA president after Stanley Blackburn retired ... Jumbo Tsuruta became a triple-champion in Japan by defeating Stan Hansen for the PWF and All-Japan United National belts. Tsuruta already held the All-Japan International title ... Big Van Vader defeated Shinya Hashimoto in a tournament final on April 24 in Osaka, Japan, to win the IWGP title ... Jim Cornette and The Midnight Express—Stan Lane and Bobby Eaton—stunned the wrestling world by leaving the NWA when they couldn't agree on a new contract with the federation.

NWA RATINGS: 1–Rick Steamboat; 2–Lex Luger; 3–Ric Flair; 4–Sting; 5–Michael Hayes; 6–The Great Muta; 7–Rick Steiner; 8–The Iron Sheik; 9–Butch Reed; 10–Bob Orton.

WWF RATINGS: 1–Hulk Hogan; 2–Rick Rude; 3–Randy Savage; 4–The Ultimate Warrior; 5–Brutus Beefcake; 6–Jake Roberts; 7–Hacksaw Duggan; 8–Dino Bravo; 9–Ted DiBiase; 10–Curt Hennig.



The Varsity Club's Steve Williams confronts Road Warrior Hawk before their tag team title match. Williams and Mike Rotundo defeated the Warriors for the belts, but were stripped of the title a month later for attacking a referee.

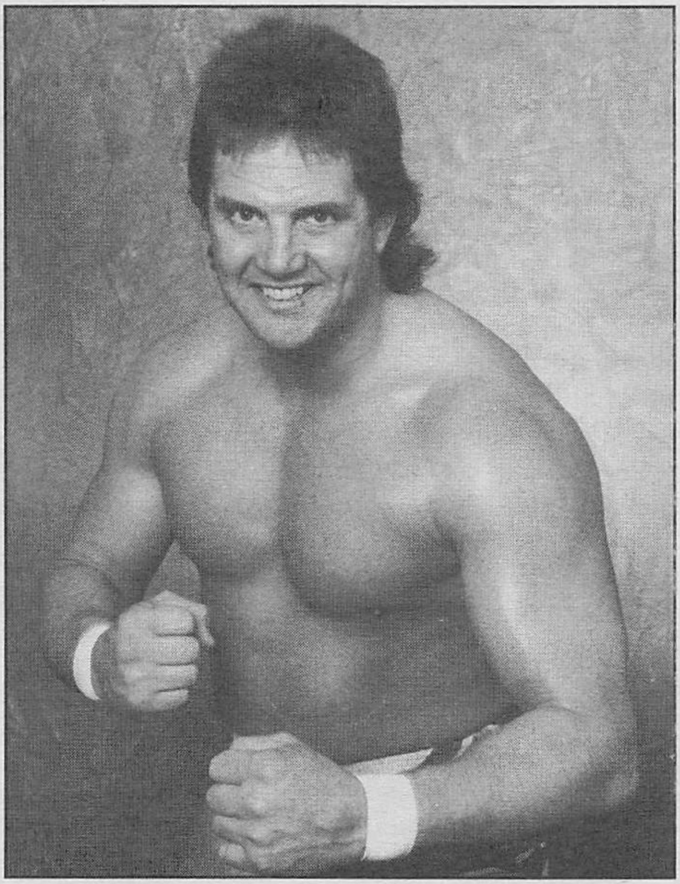
AWA RATINGS: 1–Larry Zbyszko; 2–Greg Gagne; 3–Ken Patera; 4–Wahoo McDaniel; 5–Sgt. Slaughter; 6–Tom Zenk; 7–Col. DeBeers; 8–Derrick Dukes; 9–Brad Rheingans; 10–Mike Graham.

TAG TEAMS: 1–Demolition; 2–The Road Warriors; 3–Mike Rotundo & Steve Williams; 4–Rick Steiner & Eddie Gilbert; 5–The Samoan Swat Team; 6–Akeem & Big Bossman; 7–Tully Blanchard & Arn Anderson; 8–Ken Patera & Brad Rheingans; 9–The Bushwhackers; 10–The Rockers. □

The Wrestler SPOTLIGHTS...

Every month, *The Wrestler* will comb through its extensive photo files and shine its spotlight on an outstanding wrestler, manager, or tag team. We'll present unforgettable highlights in the action-packed careers of the sport's greatest stars, culled from the most extensive photographic archives anywhere in the wrestling world!

CHRIS ADAMS



CHRIS ADAMS HAS had an interesting career, to say the least. What other wrestler has seen both of his marriages fall apart ... in the ring?

It first happened to him in 1990, after Adams had opened a wrestling school in Dallas. One of the first men he trained was Steve Austin. When teacher and student had a falling-out, Austin shockingly sought revenge with the backing of his new girlfriend—Jeannie Clark, who just happened to be Adams' ex-wife. Adams' second wife, Toni, joined the feud to make sure her husband would not be at a disadvantage.

Last year, Chris and Toni separated. Toni fled to the USWA to masquerade as Brian Christopher's nanny, Miss Simpson. Chris eventually revealed her true identity and a feud between Chris and Christopher erupted.

Chris, a native of Stratford-on-Avon, England, remains one of the most popular wrestlers in Texas today. He debuted in America in 1980 and quickly entered a feud with Rick Martel and Rip Oliver in Pacific Northwest Wrestling.

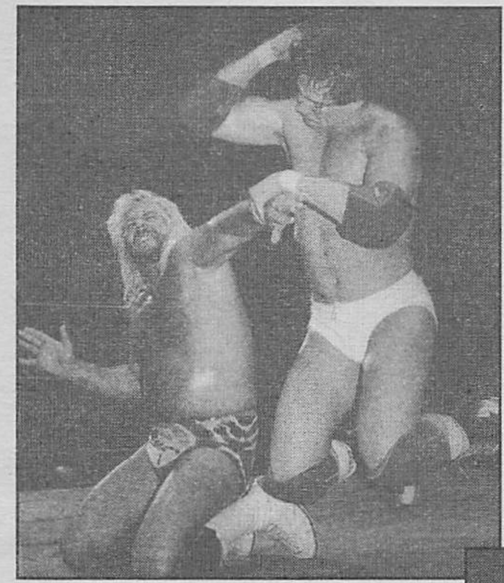
By 1983, he moved to Dallas, befriended the Von Erichs, and hired Sunshine, Jim Garvin's ex-valet. An intense feud with Garvin resulted, and Adams twice won the World Class American title from him. He eventually fired Sunshine and hired Gary Hart as his manager. Adams later joined forces with Gino Hernandez to win the World Class tag team title from The Fantastics in 1985.

Their heads were shaved when they lost to Kevin and Kerry Von Erich two months later, but Adams and Hernandez did regain the belts in November 1985.

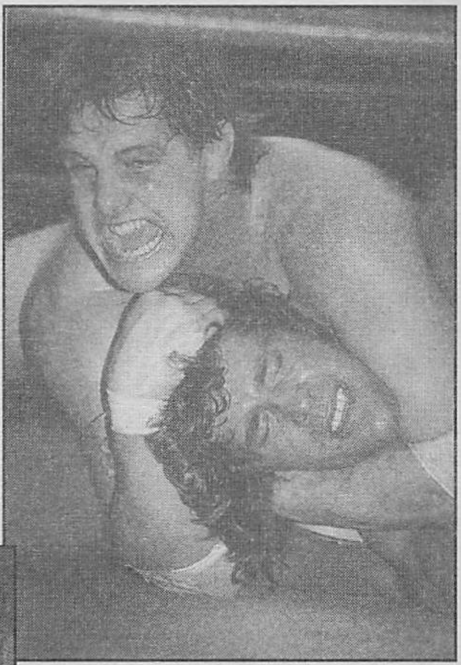
Adams was temporarily blinded and forced to retire to England when Hernandez turned against him and threw an irritating black liquid in his eyes.

He triumphantly returned on July 4, 1986, beating Rick Rude for the World Class title in Dallas. He lost the belt by default to Black Bart that fall and moved to the UWF, where he won the tag team title—and feuded—with Terry Taylor. When Taylor entered World Class territory in 1987, Adams did, too.

Of late, Adams mostly wrestles in Global, where he captured its heavyweight title from longtime foe Iceman Parsons on Christmas night. "Gentleman" Chris has won the WCCW American title three times, the World Class title once, and the World Class TV title four times. He deserves his time in the "Spotlight." □

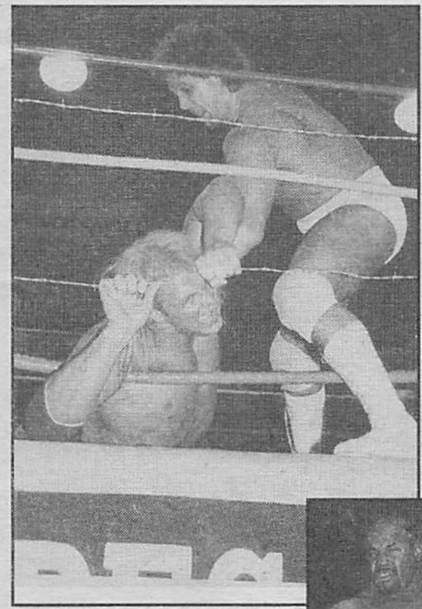


◀ March 1984: Not long after moving to Texas, Chris Adams had joined the camp of the Von Erichs, and naturally became a foe of The Freebirds. He gets the best of Michael Hayes during this bout in Fort Worth.

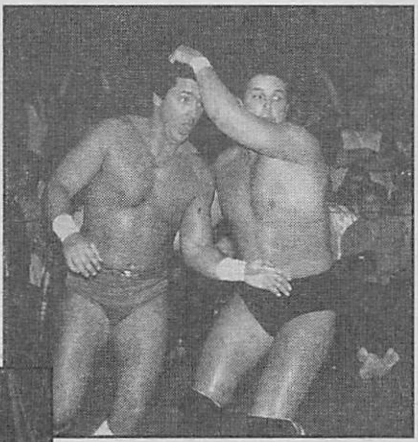


▲ December 1984: Adams had a falling-out with the Von Erichs and befriended Gino Hernandez. "Gentleman" Chris soon challenged Kerry Von Erich in Dallas.

▼ October 1990: The teacher takes on the student, as Adams battles Steve Austin. Not only did Austin seek revenge on Chris, but so did Adams' ex-wife, Jeannie Clark.

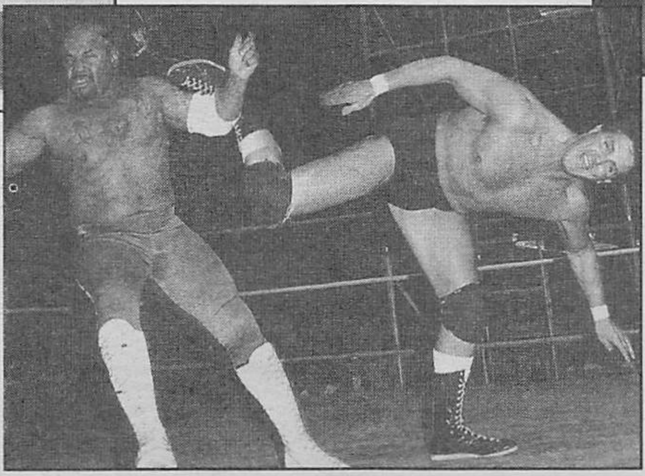


▲ July 1993: While Adams mainly wrestles in Texas, he took a side trip to Memphis last summer to face Brian Christopher. It turns out Christopher's nanny, Miss Simpson, was actually Chris' estranged wife, Toni.



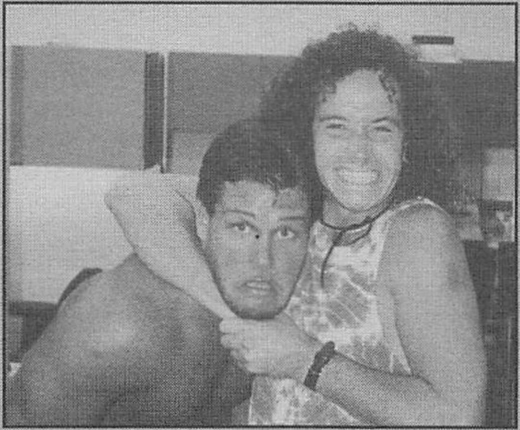
▲ December 1985: Friendships don't last long in Texas wrestling! Hernandez soon turned on Adams, bashing him into the ringpost. But the worst was yet to come, as Hernandez temporarily blinded him by throwing liquid in his eyes.

▶ April 1989: The feud between Adams and Iceman Parsons has lasted to this day. Adams uses his noted "superkick" to give Parsons something to think about.



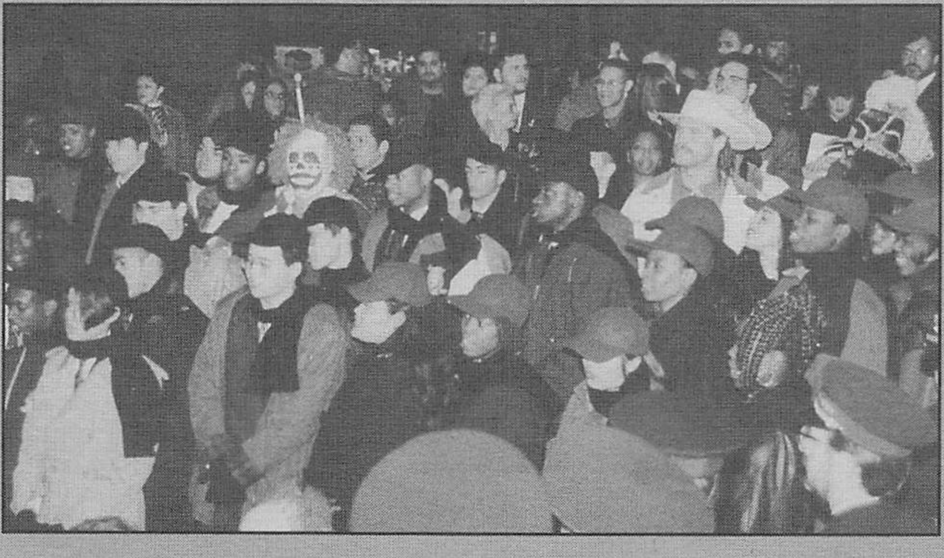
Beyond The Squared Circle

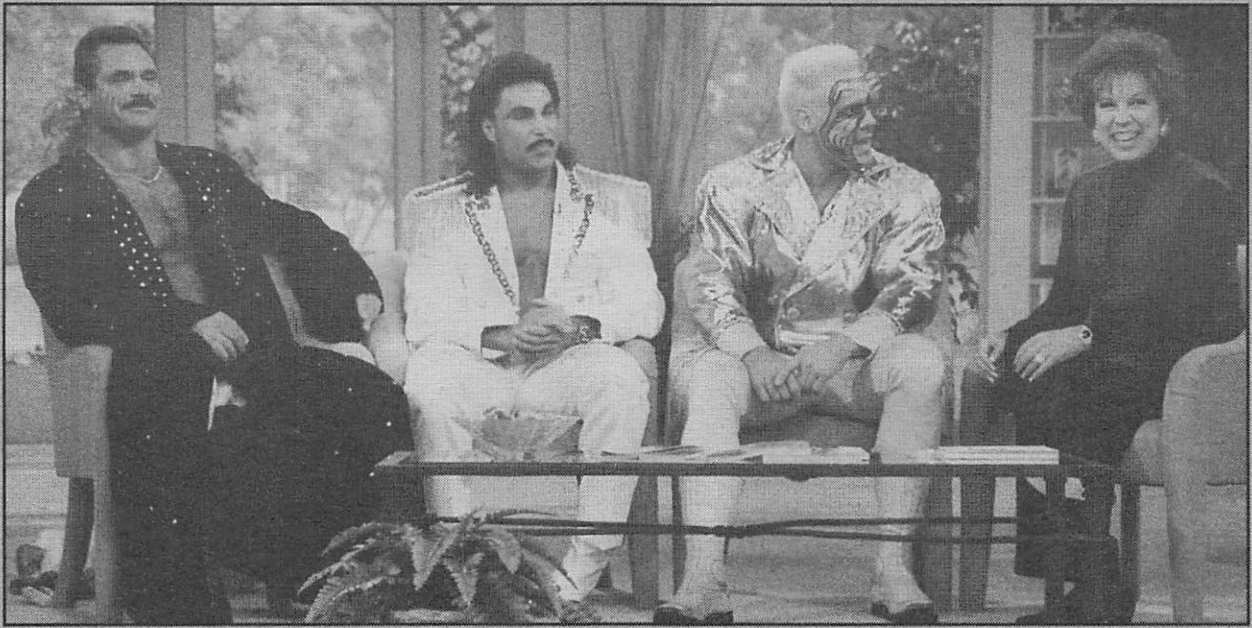
▲ Ric Flair is aware Chicago is called "that toddlin' town"; these six lucky youngsters see firsthand what it's all about. The "Nature Boy" took them by limousine for a day of fun viewing the sights of the Windy City.



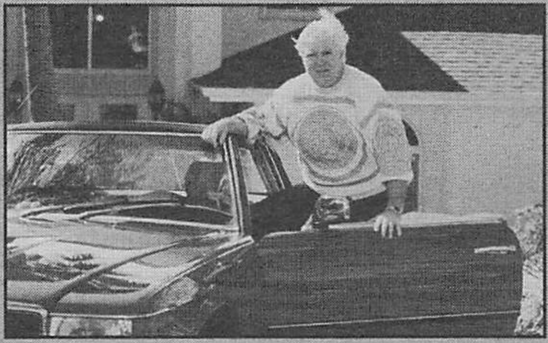
◀ The rock 'n' wrestling connection lives! MTV personality and movie star Pauly Shore put the USWA's Brian Christopher in a headlock when the two recently met. Totally awesome.

▼ Several WWF stars helped spread holiday cheer in New York when the federation joined the Salvation Army for a special benefit at Madison Square Garden. Doink, Dink, The Smokin' Gunns, and Randy Savage were on hand.





▲ WCW invaded daytime TV recently when Rick Rude, Johnny B. Badd, and Sting, among others, appeared on the syndicated talk show *Vicki!* Missy Hyatt was also there; maybe she'll soon challenge host Vicki Lawrence to a match!



▲ After Bobby Heenan left the WWF, he had more time on his hands than he knew what to do with. "The Brain" waxed and buffed his car, he says, "three times in two weeks!"

◀"Honey, I can *still* wrestle," says Fabulous Moolah to old friend Johnny Valentine when the two met at a legends convention. Even though her sleeperhold is obviously playful, we're not about to argue.

▲ The late Jay Youngblood was recently inducted into the Carolina Championship Wrestling Alliance Hall of Fame in Smithfield, North Carolina. Former tag partner Rick Steamboat and Youngblood's widow, Susan, accepted the honor on his behalf. Jimmy Valiant was also inducted.

▼ The Destroyer said "sayonara" to his three-decade wrestling career last year, and gets ribbed by old rivals Pepper Gomez and Don Leo Jonathan. The Destroyer issued a line of merchandise commemorating his retirement.

The Wrestler

TOP 10

1 **RIC FLAIR**
243, Minneapolis, MN
(6) WCW World champion

2 **YOKOZUNA**
550, Samoa
(2) WWF World champion

3 **STEVE AUSTIN**
241, Dallas, TX
(-) WCW U.S. champion

4 **BRET HART**
235, Calgary, Alberta
(4) No. 5 contender: WWF World title

5 **RAZOR RAMON**
291, Minneapolis, MN
(3) WWF Intercontinental champion

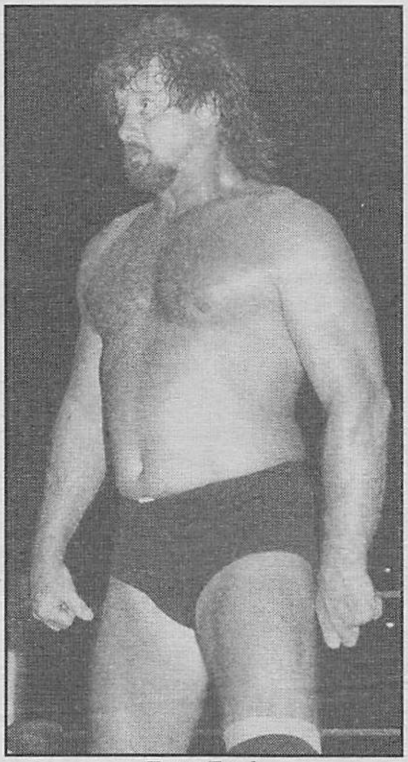
6 **STEVE REGAL**
247, Blackpool, England
(-) WCW TV champion

7 **STING**
260, Venice Beach, CA
(9) No. 6 contender: WCW World title

8 **JERRY LAWLER**
234, Memphis, TN
(-) USWA champion

9 **RICK RUDE**
246, Robbinsdale, MN
(-) No. 4 contender: WCW World title

10 **TERRY FUNK**
247, Amarillo, TX
(-) ECW heavyweight champion


Terry Funk

TAG TEAMS

1 **THE NASTY BOYS**
Combined weight: 585 pounds
(2) WCW World tag team champions

2 **THE KID & MARTY JANNETTY**
Combined weight: 431 pounds
(-) WWF World tag team champions

3 **RICK & SCOTT STEINER**
Combined weight: 483 pounds
(1) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title

4 **THE HEAVENLY BODIES**
Combined weight: 450 pounds
(3) Smoky Mountain tag team champions

5 **2 COLD SCORPIO & MARCUS BAGWELL**
Combined weight: 460 pounds
(6) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title

6 **THE QUEBECERS**
Combined weight: 472 pounds
(5) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title

7 **CACTUS JACK & MAXX PAYNE**
Combined weight: 627 pounds
(-) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title

8 **THE BRUISE BROTHERS**
Combined weight: 583 pounds
(8) USWA tag team champions

9 **PAUL ORNDORFF & PAUL ROMA**
Combined weight: 488 pounds
(-) No. 3 contenders: WCW World tag title

10 **KEVIN SULLIVAN & TASMANIAC**
Combined weight: 473 pounds
(9) ECW tag team champions

WCW
World Champion:
RIC FLAIR
(C) 243, Minneapolis, MN

1—**STEVE AUSTIN**
(5) 241, Dallas, TX
2—**BIG VAN VADER**
(C) 450, Denver, CO
3—**STEVE REGAL**
(6) 247, Blackpool, England
4—**RICK RUDE**
(2) 246, Robbinsdale, MN
5—**DUSTIN RHODES**
(1) 254, Austin, TX
6—**STING**
(3) 260, Venice Beach, CA
7—**RICK STEAMBOAT**
(9) 238, Honolulu, HI
8—**THE BOSS**
(-) 310, Cobb County, GA
9—**BRIAN PILLMAN**
(-) 226, Cincinnati, OH
10—**RON SIMMONS**
(-) 260, Perry, GA

WWF
World Champion:
YOKOZUNA
(C) 550, Samoa

1—**RAZOR RAMON**
(1) 291, Minneapolis, MN
2—**TATANKA**
(7) 260, Miami, FL
3—**THE UNDERTAKER**
(3) 320, parts unknown
4—**SHAWN MICHAELS**
(5) 220, San Antonio, TX
5—**BRET HART**
(2) 235, Calgary, Alberta
6—**LEX LUGER**
(4) 290, Chicago, IL
7—**CRUSH**
(-) 310, Honolulu, HI
8—**MARTY JANNETTY**
(-) 230, Columbia, GA
9—**DOINK THE CLOWN**
(-) 235, parts unknown
10—**LUDVIG BORGA**
(6) 258, Helsinki, Finland

GLOBAL
Global Champion:
CHRIS ADAMS
(C) 228, Stratford, England

1—**ICEMAN PARSONS**
(C) 245, St. Louis, MO
2—**ROD PRICE**
(4) 265, Los Angeles, CA
3—**SCOTT PUTSKI**
(7) 235, Austin, TX
4—**BLACK BART**
(3) 261, Pampa, TX
5—**AL PEREZ**
(2) 239, Tampa, FL
6—**MOADIB**
(-) 285, parts unknown
7—**JOHN HAWK**
(9) 280, Sweetwater, TX
8—**ACTION JACKSON**
(-) 281, Dallas, TX
9—**JAKE ROBERTS**
(8) 253, Stone Mountain, GA
10—**ANGEL OF DEATH**
(6) 310, Los Angeles, CA

USWA
USWA Champion:
JERRY LAWLER
(C) 234, Memphis, TN

1—**BRIAN CHRISTOPHER**
(3) 230, Memphis, TN
2—**EDDIE GILBERT**
(-) 222, Lexington, TN
3—**JEFF JARRETT**
(C) 220, Hendersonville, TN
4—**BUDDY LANDELL**
(1) 236, Los Angeles, CA
5—**DOUG GILBERT**
(10) 241, Lexington, TN
6—**RICK MORTON**
(-) 228, Memphis, TN
7—**KILLER KYLE**
(-) 303, Atlanta, GA
8—**JEFF GAYLORD**
(-) 280, St. Louis, MO
9—**J.C. ICE**
(-) 221, Memphis, TN
10—**TONY WILLIAMS**
(-) 235, Memphis, TN

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide telephone and arena surveys of wrestling fans and on the volume and character of mail that comes to our offices. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue. while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

MOST POPULAR

1 BRET HART
235, Calgary, Alberta
Last issue: No. 1 Most Popular

2 STING
260, Venice Beach, CA
Last issue: No. 2 Most Popular

3 RIC FLAIR
243, Minneapolis, MN
Last issue: No. 4 Most Popular

4 RAZOR RAMON
291, Minneapolis, MN
Last issue: No. 3 Most Popular

5 BRIAN PILLMAN
226, Cincinnati, OH
Last issue: unrated

6 RANDY SAVAGE
245, Sarasota, FL
Last issue: No. 8 Most Popular

7 LEX LUGER
290, Chicago, IL
Last issue: No. 6 Most Popular

8 DUSTIN RHODES
254, Austin, TX
Last issue: No. 5 Most Popular

9 TATANKA
260, Miami, FL
Last issue: No. 7 Most Popular

10 RICK STEAMBOAT
238, Honolulu, HI
Last issue: No. 9 Most Popular

MOST HATED

1 BIG VAN VADER
450, Denver, CO
Last issue: No. 2 Most Hated

2 SHAWN MICHAELS
220, San Antonio, TX
Last issue: No. 5 Most Hated

3 YOKOZUNA
550, Samoa
Last issue: No. 4 Most Hated

4 RICK RUDE
246, Robbinsdale, MN
Last issue: No. 3 Most Hated

5 STEVE AUSTIN
241, Dallas, TX
Last issue: No. 6 Most Hated

6 JEFF JARRETT
220, Hendersonville, TN
Last issue: unrated

7 CRUSH
310, Honolulu, HI
Last issue: No. 1 Most Hated

8 STEVE REGAL
247, Blackpool, England
Last issue: No. 8 Most Hated

9 LUDVIG BORGA
258, Helsinki, Finland
Last issue: unrated

10 EDDIE GILBERT
222, Lexington, TN
Last issue: unrated

SMOKY MOUNTAIN

Smoky Mountain Champion:
BRIAN LEE
(C) 251, Los Angeles, CA

1—TONY ANTHONY *(1) 235, Bucksnort, TN*
2—TIM HORNER *(4) 235, Morristown, TN*
3—TRACEY SMOTHERS *(2) 227, Atlanta, GA*
4—CHRIS CANDIDO *(7) 226, Carteret, NJ*
5—KILLER KYLE *(9) 303, Atlanta, GA*
6—STEVE ARMSTRONG *(-) 224, Marietta, GA*
7—PRINCE KHARIS *(8) 267, Cairo*
8—THE BULLET *(10) 228, parts unknown*
9—BOBBY BLAZE *(5) 222, Charlotte, NC*
10—ROBBIE EAGLE *(-) 225, Raleigh, NC*

ECW

ECW Champion:
TERRY FUNK
(C) 247, Amarillo, TX

1—SABU *(C) 220, Bombay*
2—MR. HUGHES *(5) 308, Kansas City, KS*
3—TASMANIAC *(3) 221, Tasmania*
4—TOMMY CAIRO *(7) 257, Philadelphia, PA*
5—ROCKIN' REBEL *(8) 219, Philadelphia, PA*
6—TOMMY DREAMER *(9) 245, Yonkers, NY*
7—HAWK *(2) 277, Chicago, IL*
8—KEVIN SULLIVAN *(4) 252, Boston, MA*
9—SALVATORE BELLOMO *(6) 240, Sicily, Italy*
10—THE SANDMAN *(-) 244, Philadelphia, PA*

For period ended January 12, 1994

CUMULATIVE RATINGS

These ratings are based on the past 10 issues of this magazine. We have examined our ratings for each of these issues in our Top 10 and Tag Team categories only, and assigned each position a point value: 10 points for a first-place rating, nine for second place, and so on. The point values for all wrestlers in the past 10 issues have been compiled, with a possible maximum of 100 points. Each issue we'll present the top five finishers in each category. While our regular ratings reflect the past month, these cumulative ratings give an indication of wider trends in the sport.

SINGLES

1—BIG VAN VADER....82 points
2—YOKOZUNA....67 points
3—BRET HART....65 points
4—STING....41 points
5—RIC FLAIR....39 points

TAG TEAMS

1—RICK & SCOTT STEINER....76 points
2—THE NASTY BOYS....50 points
3—THE HOLLYWOOD BLONDS....49 points
4—THE HEADSHRINKERS....46 points
5—2 COLD SCORPIO & MARCUS BAGWELL....45 points

ICWA: ICWA Champion—Jumbo Barretta; 1—Frankie Rose; 2—Surgeon General; 3—Rico Fredrico; 4—Kenny Kendall; 5—Lanny Poffo; 6—Coconut Kid; 7—Jammin' Johnny; 8—Bill Payne; 9—Cuban Assassin; 10—Sid Powers.

IWCCW: IWCCW Champion—Title Vacant; 1—Manny Fernandez; 2—Tony Atlas; 3—Tommy Dreamer; 4—Greg Valentine; 5—Tasmaniac; 6—Ray Odyssey; 7—Koko B. Ware; 8—Joe Savoldi; 9—Primo Carnera III; 10—Kendall Windham.

PWA: PWA Champion—The Hater; 1—Hawk; 2—Nailz; 3—Jerry Lynn; 4—Tommy Ferrara; 5—Brad Rheingans; 6—Derrick Dukes; 7—Billy Blaze; 8—Randy Gusto; 9—Ricky Rice; 10—Punisher.

PWF: PWF Champion—Austin Steele; 1—The Hillbilly; 2—George South; 3—Italian Stallion; 4—Terry Austin; 5—Star Ryder; 6—Scott Powers; 7—Russian Assassin I; 8—Black Scorpion; 9—American G.I.; 10—Randy Sledge.

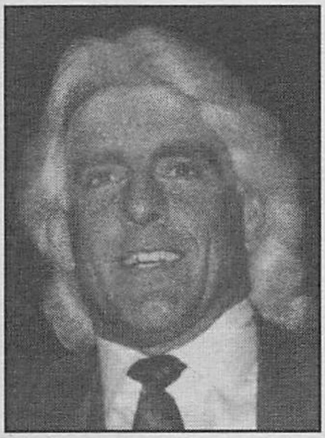
SOUTHERN STATES WRESTLING: SSW Champion—Wayne Rogers; 1—Jimmy Golden; 2—G. Q. Stratus; 3—The Mongolian Stomper; 4—Mike Samson; 5—Danny Christian; 6—Skyfire; 7—Billy Marshall; 8—Eddie Golden; 9—Keith Hart; 10—Alex Shane.

USA: USA TV Champion—Col. DeBeers; 1—Lou Andrews; 2—Bruiser Brian; 3—Larry Oliver; 4—Jesse Barr; 5—C.W. Bergstrom; 6—Silver Shadow; 7—Dane Rush; 8—Karl Pope; 9—John Rambo; 10—Jim Pope.

WWA: WWA Champion—Boy Gone Bad; 1—Ray Odyssey; 2—Abudah Singh; 3—Ed the Razor; 4—Chris Powers; 5—Duane Gill; 6—The Spider; 7—Barry Hardy; 8—Friendly Frank; 9—Scott Vida; 10—Akita Kaos.

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating over 200 wrestlers in 20 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important—and respected—ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans



Ric Flair

Finally ... "The Man" again! By now you must know that **Ric Flair** is again atop the wrestling world, having defeated **Big Van Vader** for the WCW World title at Starrcade on December 27. As a result of having won the match over the intimidating Vader via clean pinfall, the "Nature Boy" has vaulted to the top of our ratings.

On the other hand, Vader, as dangerous as he is, remains in our overall Top 10. He's capable of winning the belt back any time he gets a shot at Flair in the ring.

Besides saving his career (Flair vowed to retire had he lost at Starrcade), the victory could have serious long-term ramifications. Recall that the Flair-**Rick Rude** feud that intensified during the fall was never resolved to anyone's satisfaction.

The "Ravishing One" defeated Flair at Fall Brawl in September, but by that time WCW had severed ties with the NWA. That meant that the belt Rude won from Flair was bogus. WCW announced that Rude was a "world champion" as recognized by its International Board of Directors. THE WRESTLER and its related magazines, however, chose not to recognize the title. (If we had, WCW would have *two* world titles.)

We acknowledge Rude is a great wrestler, but stand by our decision concerning his belt. Now that a fan favorite holds the WCW World title, isn't it a perfect time to unify the federation's two "world" belts? The Flair-Rude feud could be settled once-and-for-all as well ...

Rude is the champion of something, wrote reader Mike Elias, of East Providence, Rhode Island. *If you don't want to recognize him as a world champion, fine. What about heavyweight champion? Or call his title the gold belt.*

We want to know what you think about this continuing controversy. Should WCW go ahead and unify these belts and put this issue to rest? Or should we at least give Rude's belt *some* recognition, perhaps equal to that of the U.S. title? If not, maybe you could come up with a creative name for the "Ravishing One's" title?

Strange title change. **Steve Austin** is now U.S. champion, thanks to a bizarre victory over **Dustin Rhodes** at Starrcade.

Austin and Rhodes clashed in a best-of-three-falls bout, with the former winning in two falls. The first fall, however, ended on a disqualification when "The Natural" tossed Austin over the top rope. Austin pinned Rhodes in the second fall, though he grabbed his tights in the process.

Even though the victory was tainted, we have to give Austin some credit for defeating a wrestler as talented in Rhodes in any way possible. He'll now receive number-one contender status in WCW, a slot we always reserve for the U.S. champion.

Alundra Blayze

The name game. If you haven't heard by now, **Alundra Blayze** is the new WWF World Women's champ, having defeated **Heidi Lee Morgan** in a tournament final. Blayze is, of course, the former **Madusa Miceli**. But from now on, we'll use her current moniker ... unless she changes it again.

Another familiar face, whose name has sort of changed, resurfaced recently. **Big Bossman** charged into WCW and has gone right after Rude. He stormed the ring during a TV taping in Atlanta after **Davey Boy Smith** failed to show up for a match. He pinned Rude in an impromptu bout, but lost the rematch at Starrcade. In WCW, Bossman bills himself as **The Boss**. Whatever name he uses, he's quickly established himself as a bona fide WCW contender.

What do you think of name changes? Are they silly, or can they help slumping wrestlers get a fresh start? How do you feel about the mixed-up WCW title situation? As always, we value your input. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o THE WRESTLER, Box 956, Fort Washington, PA 19034. □

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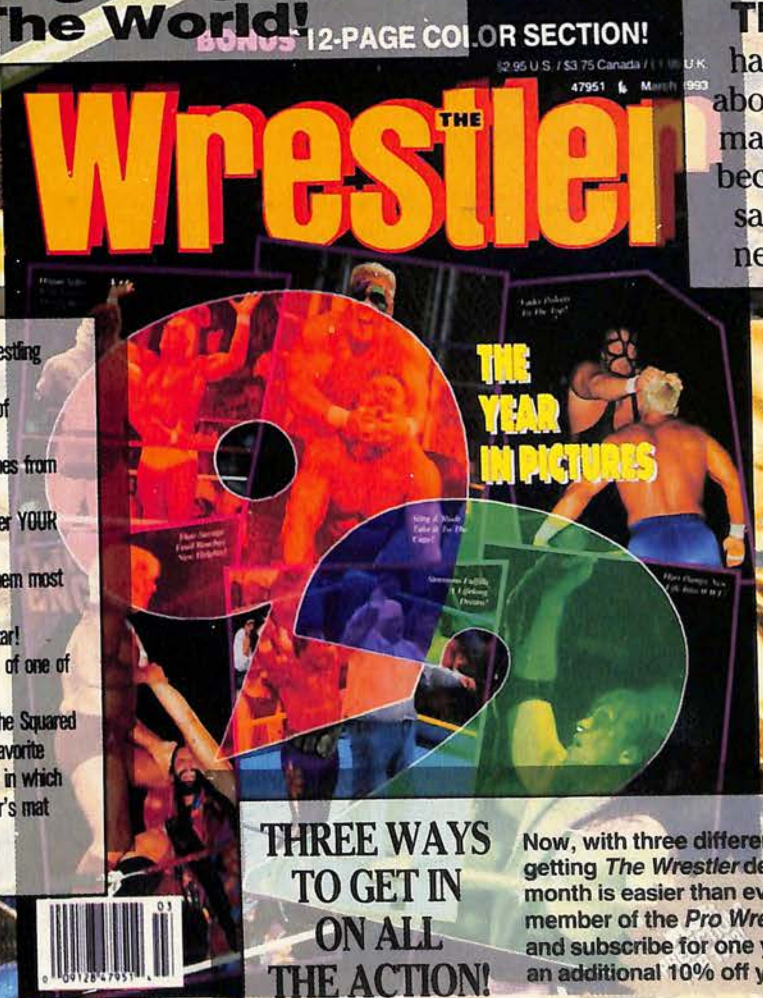

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